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[“I HAVE GOT HOLD OF A YOUNG LADY WHO CALLS HERSELF CINDERELLA, AND TELLS ME SHE IS YOUR YOUNGEST SISTER.”]

## CINDERELLA.

### CHAPTER IV.

MANY and many a night Pauline repeated the same thing, and cried herself to sleep, and had good reason to.

What a sad change had befallen her! No longer the baby of the family, the pet of the household. She was “nobody’s child,” and left to shift entirely for herself. It was no one’s business to look after her.

They saw that she came in to meals in the housekeeper’s room, and Phoebe now and then brushed her hair and fastened her frock, but she was left entirely to her own devices.

Mrs. Taff could not and would not be bothered. Miss Rivers left no directions, except that she was to be taken in.

And Phoebe had a sweetheart, who occupied most of her time.

Grant, the gardener, was as cross as two sticks, and always slammed the big gate in the child’s face if he saw her coming near to his domains.

Jane, the cook, *pro tem*. (kitchen-maid when

the house was full), was kind to her, and let her go with her to milk the cows, and sit beside the hearth on a little creepy stool in the kitchen; and Tom, the cowboy, was another ally; so she gradually descended from the servants’ hall and found her level in the kitchen, and in the end spent most of her time in that apartment.

Once or twice Mrs. Taff had said,— “Send that child out of the kitchen; she has no business there,” but after a while she was allowed to remain unnoticed.

She was out of the way, no trouble, and was welcome; so she spent all her time indoors with Jane, generally sitting close to the big fireplace, on a low three-legged stool, nursing a grimy kitten; and Phoebe one day, in a sudden burst of good humour, dubbed her “Cinderella.”

The name fitted her exactly, and was adopted by the household as an excellent joke, and remained her nickname for many a long year.

She knew the story. She had heard it in those happier times when she sat on Farmer Meadows’s knee, and she was quite proud of being called “Cinderella.”

Did not the fairy godmother come in coach and six, and take her away in great splendour? Why should she not have a fairy godmother, too?

She threw out a few hints on this subject to Phoebe, who laughed immoderately at the idea.

“Bless us and save us!” she exclaimed, with her hands on her hips, “what next? Why, child, you have no belongings—no more than the pump in the yard; no one even knows the name of your mother’s people. The sooner you get such foolish ideas out of that head of yours the better. You’ll be Cinderella all your life. Just look at the holes in your frock! and, my goodness gracious! did any one ever see the like! You’re more like a little beggar than anything else, that you are!”

All the same, she never volunteered to mend any of the yawning rents which the child had got in running wild through the woods with Tom, the cow-boy.

Her very, very respectable wardrobe, which had been put together by Mrs. Meadows’s careful, clever fingers, more nearly resembled the property of a scarecrow than anything else

but she had been a year at Mount Rivers and more, and it had never once been replenished.

It was the second summer after her arrival there when her two sisters, a train of servants, and many visitors came down.

She was now nearly eight years old, and a veritable wild, unkempt, neglected child.

Mrs. Taft's addition to the yellow bottle reduced her to a state of chronic somnolence when the house was empty.

Phoebe was idle, lazy, and a great flirt, and did not consider that she had been hired as nursemaid; so she told Jane, in Pauline's hearing, with a toss of her red head.

But Jane was her friend. Jane cobbled up her frocks, and patched and let them down, but her efforts made matters but little better. She was, as she said herself, but a poor hand with the needle; and Jane took her with her to church on Sunday evenings—in fact, Jane was her patroness, and I am afraid she had a very unpromising-looking client.

There was great bustle previous to the arrival of the Misses Rivers and their guests. Rooms, long unopened, were swept and dusted, covers taken off the furniture, and in some cases floors scoured. The garden walks were all raked, quantities of flowers and fruit sent in by the early Grant, but no thought of making Pauline presentable occurred to anyone's mind!

She returned one afternoon late from sitting in the woods in a deplorable state of tatters, her locks hanging loose over her shoulders, her straw hat with half the crown missing, her bare arms and hands and face burnt to a rich mahogany, and was caught in this condition by a very smart lady's maid, whom she had, of course, never seen before, and who hustled her up, just as she was, to her sisters' dressing-room.

There she found a high-nosed old lady in gold spectacles, Lady Augusta, and her two sisters, already dressed for dinner.

There was a roaring, huge fire in the chimney, for the room was large and had been long unoccupied. Close to it sat Matilda, in pale blue satin, cut square, and trimmed with white satin. She could scarcely take her eyes off this garment as she was ushered into the room.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Matilda, half rising, "what is this? You don't mean to say that this awful-looking object is Pauline!"

"So it seems," said Lady Augusta, scrutinizing her through her spectacles; "a regular little street arab."

"She has been allowed to run wild," exclaimed Carrie, indignantly.

"It's scandalous, Matilda! Quite disgraceful! You should speak about it."

"All very well to talk, miss," put in the maid, "but Mrs. Taft do say there ain't doing nothing with her. She's like a wild Indian, and won't wear good clothes; but tears everything to tatters, and is just a little savage."

"I'm sure she looks it," agreed Matilda, glaring at her stepsister. "What's to be done? Suppose any one was to see her?" with a face of horror.

"Oh, there's no fear of that, miss. She lives in the kitchen," returned Mrs. Taft's ally.

"She ought to be looked after—to have a maid," said Lady Augusta, decisively. "It's not respectable."

"Yes, that's all very fine," returned her eldest sister; "but who is to do it? We have twenty brooms just as many servants as we want. They have all plenty to do without looking after this young orang-outang. It will be best to leave her alone for the present, and after I am married she shall go to some school. Here, Martin," to her maid, "take her away; don't let her come near me, and don't let us see her again. She's a perfect little border. Keep her out of sight, whatever you do!"

And thus she was dismissed, and went downstairs with a bursting heart, but too proud to

cry, clenching her small hands with the effort to keep back her tears.

Now that there were a tribe of servants in the kitchen, and Jane was debarred there, she had no sanctuary. She dared not be seen upon the stairs nor in any public part of the house. She lived mostly out-of-doors, creeping up to bed at dusk, like a stealthy little thief.

There was a great deal of gay company, ladies in lovely dresses playing archery or croquet on the lawn; riding, driving, and picnic parties; dinners and dances, all pressed into a week or ten days, many besides coming and going, and great trunks full of dresses for the wedding from London.

Pauline saw and knew all these things from her post in the background. She saw grand dinners being served up, with roast, and game, and fish, and soups, and sweets, and ices; whilst she was despatched to bed with a bone and a crust!

Now and then she was allowed to run messages downstairs from the housekeeper's room to the larder or kitchen, and to carry parcels, &c.

She was glad of the chance; it was better than roaming about the plantations alone, for Tom was too busy to play with her nowadays.

Occasionally she met her elder sister (she had ordered her rage to be mended, and she was not so deplorable an object, though her frock was sadly faded and patched).

Matilda managed the house as before, and kept Mrs. Taft to her work, and in terror, but one afternoon Mrs. Taft was off her guard, and she received an unexpected order to get out some very valuable old Dresden china ornaments for the table, and was not in a condition to comply with this demand.

She was not in a condition to move such delicate and valuable things, but all the same she mounted a chair in the store closet, and handed them down one by one to Phoebe, and Phoebe left with her arms full, whilst Pauline stood holding the chair, to keep it steady.

At this moment Mrs. Taft took out the cruet piece—a kind of candlestick—and, letting it slip, tried to recover it—in vain. Indeed, she gave a scream of dismay as it fell on the stone floor, and was smashed into a hundred pieces. Hearing Matilda's voice coming down the passage she turned to Pauline with a hoarse voice, and said,—

"I'll say you did it."

Before she had time to expostulate Matilda was in the doorway, her face in a blaze, her eyes riveted on the fragments. She was too angry to speak, and Mrs. Taft, from the chair above, just pointed one finger to her accomplice.

In a second Matilda seized her by the shoulder, her hard fingers pressed into her unprotected neck, and with the other hand she hit the child with the palm hard on the cheek, and not content with this, snatched up a yard measure that lay close to her hand, and laid it about her hands, and arms, and neck in a kind of blind fury, exclaiming as she did so, "Two hundred pounds' worth of china! Two hundred pounds' worth of china! Oh, you hateful little wretch! You did it on purpose!"

More blows. Pauline did not speak, she did not even cry out whilst she acted as whipping-girl for Mrs. Taft, who still stood upon the chair as if petrified at the catastrophe.

At length her sister's arm was tired, and pushing her violently from her she thrust her out of the room, saying,—

"Begone, don't let me see you again!"

And she, only too glad to escape, too proud to expostulate herself, fled along a passage downstairs, and heading on of the house, to an old summer-house in the pleasure ground, tormented by nothing but bats, and ants, and spiders.

Leaning her throbbing head on her wealed and blistered hands she wept and sobbed as if her little heart would break.

She wept and sobbed for a long time, and regardless of neighbouring ears. There was no one to hear her but the birds; no human being ever came into this part of the pleasure

ground, called "the wilderness," but today was the exception that proved the rule.

Suddenly she was aware that the floor was darkened, and, looking up, beheld two gentlemen, a middle-aged man, with a nice kind face, and a youth, in fact, little more than a boy, who were gazing at her with an unmistakable curiosity.

"What is the matter, child?" said the old gentleman, as she called him to herself, though he was not really more than forty; "what are you crying for? Tell me."

She maintained a dead silence, and gazed at him in amazement as she tried in vain to stifle her long drawn sobs.

"Is it this?" said the boy, pointing to her face, which burned painfully, and showed the mark of five fingers imprinted on her cheek.

"More likely that," returned the other. "Look at her hands and arms all bruised and in red weals. Some one has been beating her. She looks half wild," in a low voice. "Come," he added, sitting down beside her and speaking in a different tone, "what have you been doing to get yourself into such trouble, eh? Tell me all about yourself. What scrape have you been in?"

"None; I did nothing," she sobbed out at last.

"Oh, I say! come now," expostulated the boy, reproachfully.

"It was Mrs. Taft, the housekeeper. She dropped the china candlesticks, and said, 'I'll say it was you,' she burst out, passionately; and then Matilda came in, and said it cost two hundred pounds, and she beat me hard over the head, and neck, and arms—see," pushing up her poor bruised bare shoulder; "but it wasn't me; it was Mrs. Taft. She's a wicked, wicked woman."

"And who is Matilda?" inquired the two new comers, in a breath.

"Matilda is Miss Rivers, my sister," she blurted out.

"What!" cried the elderly gentleman, "what do you mean, my good child? What is your name—what are you called?" putting his hand under her chin, and holding up her face.

"I'm called Cinderella," she returned, quickly, interpreting the dubious glances cast upon her shabby frock and poor, ill-cared for appearance; "but my real name is Pauline Rivers."

She was glib enough, you see; being brought up in the society of her elders had given her a bold and ready tongue.

By this time a number of people were assembled on the grass outside, and a silvery, feminine voice was heard calling out,—

"Lord Rockfort, Lord Rockfort, what are you doing in that dismal old place? When have you got hold of?"

The owner of this dulcet tone was Carrie, her stepsister, and presently his lordship emerged, leading her by the hand, a sorry spectacle, with tangled hair, battered hat, patched frock, broken boots, weals on her hands, and the marks of tears and a blow on her face.

"I have got hold of a young lady," he returned, standing on the steps, and addressing Carrie and the assembled gaping crowd, "a young lady, Miss Rivers, who calls herself Cinderella, and who tells me that she is your youngest sister."

Here a loud titter ran round among the assembled ladies, who evidently thought the whole thing was a joke, got up for their amusement, and were quite ready to be easily pleased.

A dead silence ensued, and Lord Rockfort said,—

"Is she really your sister, Miss Rivers?" addressing himself to Matilda, who had joined the party, and was annoying the scene with livid face and lurid gaze.

"She is our half sister—half-witted," returned Carrie, the most ready in this terrible emergency. "Please, don't mind her; let her be sent away. Here, come with me," approaching quickly, and holding out her hand, as if she were half afraid the child would bite her.



"I won't go with you; you are as bad as Matilda," she returned, shrinking back. "I'm not half-witted, although I do live in the kitchen."

In the end she consented to be led away by Lord Rockfort, who had been her discoverer. He put a few pointed questions to her as he took her to Jane—questions that she answered as frankly as she could. How long she had been at Mount Rivers, who taught her how old she was?

Unfortunately for Matilda, he took a very unfattering view of her conduct. A stormy scene ensued between them, pervasion and generalities were useless, against plain facts; and the upshot of it all was that, thanks to Pauline's untimely appearance, the match was broken off, as Lord Rockfort positively declined to ally himself with Cinderella's sister.

He had had a glimpse behind the scenes just in time, and beat abouty retreat from the matrimonial paradise in store for him.

It can easily be imagined that Pauline was less popular than ever after this awful catastrophe. She was kept up in her own room a prisoner until a fitting wardrobe was prepared for her; and then she was despatched to a school, that placed nearly the whole length of England between her and Mount Rivers.

## CHAPTER V.

Pauline was sent to school, as we have already remarked, along, long journey, all alone, moon-dream, under charge of the guard, with a card with her name and address sewn on her jacket, just as if she was a parcel by goods train. She travelled from seven in the morning till seven at night, was transferred into a branch line, which, after another hour's journey, brought her to a small country town. Here she was met by a porter who had been on the look-out for her, and who shouldered her box and gruffly bade her follow him out of the station, which she did, though scarcely ready to drop with fatigue and hunger, for a couple of stale bath buns and a glass of milk had been her only refreshment during the whole day.

For fully half a mile they walked—he in front, smiling behind—up the principal street, which was on the side of a steep hill, then down, and through a narrow paved road, out into the suburbs, between high-walled gardens and fields. At last, to Pauline's great joy, they came to a full stop before a noisy iron gate, and an immense, old-fashioned red brick house, with numerous windows, and a very steep flight of steps up to the hall door.

They rang, and were admitted into a stone hall, and Pauline into a little parlour, where she found three elderly ladies at tea. They stared, very hard at her; and she was quite some new variety of child; but seeing that she did not bite, and was both tired and hungry, they gave her each a fish-like shake of the hand, and invited her to take off her hat, and have some bread-and-butter and tea.

She promptly fell asleep before the meal was over, and was conducted upstairs—a long way, it seemed, near the top of the house—where she found a small bed, into which she crept the moment she had pulled off her clothes, and instantly was in the arms of Morpheus.

Next morning she was awake by a loudly clanging bell, and a great subsequent noise of rattling and squeaking and splashing of water, and, looking about, saw four or five other girls, all a good deal older than herself, up and dressing.

"Here, you now come," cried one of them, "get up at once—no lying in bed here, it's six o'clock. Come, out your jump, and let us have you acquainted with us."

Very reluctantly she slid out of bed, still rubbing her eyes, and stood in the middle of the floor bare-footed in her night dress. The apartment opened into another and much larger dormitory, and a number of girls, half-dressed, looked to the door to join in this inspection of the new arrival.

"Laws! what an ugly little elf!" cried a fat

girl, with quantities of curly red hair, and large, plump white shoulders.

"Grandmother, grandmother, what are you bawling?" added another, as she stood in the doorway, with brush in hand.

"There, you may get on your clothes," remarked the girl who had called her, "we don't want to see any more of you, you toad-faced little wretch! I suppose you know the nice character you have had sent here by your own sisters?"

"No—and I don't care what they say," she returned, defiantly.

"Oh! no; but perhaps other people do," ironically. "You are said to be a malignant, malicious liar by your own flesh and blood—deceitful and wicked to the last degree—a regular bad lot. That's the reason you have been put among us big girls, because Miss Jones does not want you to poison the minds of the younger children; and we will keep you in order, Miss Sapphire! None of your lies or deceitful ways with us."

"My name is not Sapphire," she cried, with blazing eyes, for she had a good knowledge of the Bible if of nothing else, "and I don't tell lies, but my sisters do."

"Oh, of course," sarcastically. "And pray what is your name, spitfire?"

"My name is Pauline."

"Pauline! My. How fine! And what did they call you for short? Polly?"

"No. I was always called something else."

"Something else? Well, what was it? Come, don't be all day about telling us, and you'd better look sharp, for if you are not in the school-room when the bell goes you get no breakfast!"

"They called me Cinderella," she returned, boldly, unabashed by much derisive giggling, and then commenced her toilet. And strange to say, by that name she was always known at school, and she was there for no less than nine years. Sometimes it was abbreviated to 'Cindy,' sometimes Nellie, and she was still Cindy or Cinderella Rivers when she was quite grown-up and went into long dresses.

The school she was sent to was very large, very cheap, and by no means select. There were sixty girls, from ten to eighteen years of age. They were fed and housed, and taught for thirty-five pounds a year, so I need scarcely mention that the board and accommodation was of the least luxurious description.

The school-room was a huge apartment, looking out on the yard. It had four bare, narrow tables running down the middle, and desks all round. Here they lived, ate their frugal meals, and learnt their lessons. One of the Miss Jones's presided over their mental, or as she came might be, physical food, at the end of three tables; and the French governess, a little snub-woman, with a knitted covering on her head, at the other. The food was simply white-stale bread and dripping—hot water and milk for breakfast and dinner. It would be hard indeed to say of that kind of meat. It was generally a miscellaneous stew, and Pauline often heard the big girls hint that it was most likely the remains of some animal who had died a natural death. They were always delighted when the dinner consisted of large plied dishes of boiled conchies, for they knew then what they were eating, which was of itself a rare treat.

Very often they were very hungry, and those girls who had pocket-money carried on a traffic with the day-scholars for buns, oranges, tarts and meat pies. Those were the lucky girls who had money—pocket-money. Cinderella never had a farthing, never had a letter, never went home for the holidays. In time she lived down her bad reputation. She was quick and bright at lessons, and made rapid strides, for she liked learning, and was ashamed to feel her deplorable ignorance.

A great girl of eight, who could neither read nor write, was an object of wonder and contempt to her school-fellows. They went for hateful walks two-and-two every day, and always the same road, always the same distance. Some of the elder girls, among whom

she still herded, were wont to find little three-cornered notes under stones and leave others in their places. They had too much liberty. One Miss Jones out walking had not sufficient eye-power to look after sixty girls. These big girls, too, had grand supper parties in their own rooms, at which she assisted, more as an humble retainer than a guest. Cinderella washed the teeth, tumbled, fetched water, &c., and was suffered to seat herself at the edge of the cloth spread on the floor (N.B. a sheet), and partake of the least choice of the delicacies before her company.

"Has anyone seen the little grey man this time?" said Fanny Gibbs, the red-haired girl, at one of these convivial meetings, as she glanced round the table, glass in hand.

"No, no one yet," returned Amelia Stocker, the lanky dark girl who had ordered Cinderella out of bed the first morning.

"I don't believe there's any such person," said Fanny, "it's all rubbish and nonsense; and, anyway, it's a very odd thing that I've never seen him."

"Don't about till you are out of the wood," cried her *cis-a-vis*.

"No, I won't; and, anyway, here's his very good health," quaffing off her raspberry vinegar. "Here, Lottie, I see you are waiting for the tumbler—(to another); mind you drink his health too."

"Indeed, I'll do nothing of the sort," turning a little pale. "If you had seen him as I have, you would not be so polite to him," shaking her head.

"Who is he? When did you see him? What is he like?" inquired Cinderella, breathlessly.

"Listen to her little petition," said Fanny, derisively. "Does not Cindy Rivers know about the little grey man, and all the queer people in this hateful old house?"

"No, she does not," put in another, "and, what's the use of telling her. Anyway," looking at her, contemptuously, "little people should be seen and not heard," and then they changed the subject. But Cinderella was on her mettle to find out the mystery, and soon was told many strange things by means of her friend, Letty Thompson, who slept in the lower dormitory.

This old house was let to the Miss Jones's for a mere song. It was the family mansion of a line now nearly extinct. The last male heir had been lost in an Arctic expedition, and two maiden ladies who owned it preferred to live in London to this out-of-the-way country town. Besides, it was a huge place, and would take tribes of servants to keep it in order, and it had no land about it to make it worth anyone's while to occupy as a country place. There was only a great long wilderness of a garden at the back, to which you went by a tunnel under the yard.

Near the gate there were rows of potatoes planted and some broad beans. The walks were made of coal-dust, and made the place look gloomier than ever; then, beyond this, the only cultivated place, was a great wilderness, a mass of high grass, high box, old apple-trees, gooseberry and currant bushes, all lashed together by "Robin round the hedge," and everywhere weeds, gigantic weeds.

No one, not the most adventurous, ever penetrated more than a few yards—the region had a bad name.

Besides this there were two large yards; the outer full of tumble-down stabling; the inner, a series of rooms like offices and chambers, dreary and dank. The girls used to try and play hide-and-seek among them, but the cobwebs, the broken flooring, and the dust were too overpowering.

No one could tell what they had been used for, but there was accommodation in them for at least fifty servants. The house itself was full of long passages, sharp corners, narrow dark stairs, and rooms in the most unexpected places, the very most proper and suitable home for ghosts.

The top story was held to be the place where they chiefly walked, and the girls said it was a very odd thing the Miss Jones's slept all on the

first floor themselves, left the second to the young children and mademoiselle, and the third to the big girls alone. The servants slept below in the basement, flatly refusing to sleep elsewhere.

Cinderella discovered that she was greatly in request to run messages upstairs in the dusk. "Ignorance was bliss" in her case, and she being good-natured was proud and pleased to do the big girls' errands, but after she knew more she remembered how every face in the room would be fixed on her with an expression of nervous expectancy as she returned from her mission.

One night Fanny went downstairs after they had retired to their rooms to borrow a novel from a girl in the second floor. Fanny read in bed, burning her own candles. It's a mercy that they were not all burnt alive, for she was most careless, and the old wood was like tinder.

After a time, her companions heard her coming down the passage—then a smothered shriek—then a rush, and a beating of her hands on the door. It was quickly opened, and she fell into the room in a dead faint.

She did not come to for a long time, in spite of a generous supply of cold water, and violent rubbing of her extremities.

"She has seen the little grey man," was whispered round the circle, in an awestruck whisper, as the girls shrank close to one another for mutual protection, and looked and barricaded the door.

Their surmises were perfectly correct. When she came back to consciousness she shuddered and wept, and was quite hysterical, as, in a broken voice, she declared that there, just at the corner in the wall near the next room, she had been going by, thinking of nothing, and, all of a sudden, there was a figure close to her—a hideous dwarf, with an enormous head, wrinkled yellow skin, and fierce black eyes, dressed in a short grey cloak, and a tall peaked grey felt hat.

"Such a wicked look as he gave me," she reiterated, "it makes my flesh creep to think of him. Oh, I shall never get over it."

They were a long time in getting her to bed, and she insisted on having someone to sleep on either side of her for protection, and talking was carried on till the small hours, and Cindy heard more about the house and its character than she had ever done before.

Almost everyone had seen something or heard something strange and unaccounted for, and many had left the school, and others would gladly have followed their example, but their parents would not listen to them. Miss Jones's terms were so cheap, and the Miss Jones's themselves shut their ears, and were deaf as the traditional adder to any tales, and a girl who came with a story or made a scene got no redress; indeed, she was frequently punished.

Some openly believed in ghosts. What else were the voices, the footsteps, the whispers, the visions of the Dwarf, also of figures seen in the garden and the empty offices. Others maintained that a gang of coiners carried on their trade in some part of the house which was shut up, and which was exceedingly mysterious.

There was a legend that a large suite of rooms, fully furnished, was in the closed wing, and that there were cellars below the house big enough to hold a regiment.

It seemed that everyone had had an experience except Cinderella, and she was not to be singular in this respect for long.

If there was one punishment more dreaded than another, it was being sent to bed before tea. Girls would do anything rather than lie alone wide-awake in the great empty top of the house. It was chiefly there, in the twilight hour, that people and things had been seen.

Cindy, for some minor fault, was despatched to bed at four o'clock, and went singing upstairs. She liked a holiday. She meant to read a story book, and was more triumphant than penitent. She went to bed—it seemed so strange by daylight—and being quite well—and the whole of the top story was so quiet and silent. She took her book, prepared to enjoy herself, it was *The Children of the New Forest*, and was soon absorbed in their history.

She read steadily on, holding it closer to her eyes as the light failed. A sudden sound of stealthy footsteps coming along the passage caused her heart to beat a little faster.

"Could it be the little grey man?" she asked herself, apprehensively. *It was.*

The door gave a little creak, and a hideous head was protruded inside, just a little higher than the door handle.

Their eyes met point-blank, for her bed exactly faced the door, and they looked at each other for fully a minute. He was very swarthy, with beetling brows, and a large wart on his nose. He was indescribably hideous and repulsive-looking. But he was no ghost; he was flesh and blood. She was convinced she saw his eyes and lips move, and the dirty hand that grasped the door round which he peered was very human.

He was not as tall or as big as she was, she said to herself, boldly; he was nothing but a dirty little dwarf. She was not afraid of him. She would see who he was, and what he wanted.

"Who are you?" she cried, throwing down her book on the counterpane, and speaking in a loud voice, and in a tone that sounded strange even to herself.

A hideous grimace was his only reply, a rolling of his eyes, a lolling out of his tongue. It was a face she could have made herself. She was notorious for frightful contortions of her countenance; and, all timidity cast to the winds, she now sprang out of bed and rushed to the door.

Her sudden action took the dwarf very much by surprise; he darted back and scuttled down the passage. She noted the very look of his funny little short legs as they trotted nimbly along under his heavy body. He rushed into a room where they kept their boxes, and into another off that containing old lumber. By the time she had followed him he was gone, had vanished.

Valiant Cinderella looked about in bewilderment, there was not a sign of him to be seen. She had the hardihood to search among the dusty old furniture and in vain; and then, quite carried out of herself by her adventure, she sped downstairs like a lapwing, in night-dress and bare feet just as she was, and burst into the schoolroom, breathless.

It was what was called the "silent hour"—the time for learning lessons for the following day. The elder girls acted as warders, so to speak, and kept order. You can picture their astonishment when they saw Cinderella panting before them, exclaiming, imperiously,—

"Listen, girls, all of you. I've just seen the Dwarf."

This announcement insured her an attentive hearing; every head was raised at once, every eye fixed on her intently. You might hear a pin drop.

"He came to the door and looked in for a good while. I asked who he was, and he only made a face—like this—so I just jumped out of bed, and ran after him."

Here a murmur of amazement and incredulity ran round the room.

"It's made up; she never saw him," cried Fanny from a distant desk. "An excuse to come downstairs."

"What was he like?" demanded another, austere. "Describe him."

"He was only a little taller—half a head—than the handle of the door; he had a big head and body, and short legs in leather gaiters; he wore a grey cape, he has a hideous yellow face, big eyebrows, and a wart on his nose!"

Undoubtedly it was this last enumeration—the wart—that carried the day, and conviction to her listeners' ears, and she was at once regarded as a heroine.

"Fancy following him into the far box room," ejaculated one in an awestruck tone, "and his vanishing into thin air!"

"Of course," urged another, "you'll never go back up there to bed all alone. Wrap yourself up in a cloak, and stay. I would sooner die than go back!"

"Of course I shall go back," she returned, bravely, proud of the sensation she had created, and determined to show her courage. I'm off

now. I'm not afraid of the little grey man, waving her arm to her schoolfellows with a gesture of patronage. "So good-bye," and in an instant she had departed as speedily as she came. Her boasting brought her no ill-luck; instead of that she became a person, young as she was, of some importance in the school. She was looked upon with a strange mixture of awe and respect, despite her tender years. She was the only person among sixty girls who had dared to chase the bugbear of the school, and who was not afraid of him; indeed, it was rumoured that he was afraid of her, for she never once saw him again, and his visits to the upper story ceased for a long time.

## CHAPTER VI.

TIME went on. Cinderella was growing up. She was very tall for her age—past sixteen. She was now in long dresses and the first class. She had spent several holidays with her friend Letty, whose father was a clergyman in a neighbouring county, but her last holidays (summer ones) she was compelled to pass at school, for Letty's relatives had scolded her.

She saw, as she had often seen before, the other girls' boxes brought out, and packed and corded, and they and their owners depart to enjoy themselves at home in the height of summer for six weeks; then the Miss Jones's went to the seaside, the cook went, and the housemaid and Cinderella had the whole place to themselves.

She was never a girl who could sit down quietly and work or read all day, and day after day, and keep herself cool and quiet.

No, the blood that ran in her veins was like quicksilver. She was young, adventurous, and restless, and must be doing something; but it was not easy to find occupation.

She breakfasted, practised, drew, read a few pages, then threw away the book, and set out to wander about the place, in search of she knew not exactly what. If she had put it plainly into words, perhaps, it would have been "the house's secret," to discover and wrest it from it—for that it had a secret no one doubted, not even the Miss Jones's themselves.

Day by day she rambled about the gardens, the house, the out-offices, and saw no one worse than herself, but she heard plain footsteps more than once, and more than one, in the dusk.

She picked up a man's glove in the garden, quite a respectable dogskin one, rather small size, and she discovered a well-beaten track in the wilderness, the approach to which was carefully concealed by weeds and bushes—a track that looked as if it was in constant, if not daily, use. Who used it? None of the legitimate tenants of the house, that was certain.

She found the clue quite by accident. She was routing out some books from a dusty old cupboard in a big empty room they used for dancing, and which corresponded to the schoolroom in size, and was exactly above it. In pushing and struggling with a book tightly wedged in between two others, you can picture her astonishment when she felt the whole bulk of the bookcase coming towards her *en masse*.

She thought the house was about to fall down or the end of the world arriving, instead of which it was a door—a door on which were these shelves, and she had unwittingly opened it. She peeped through, and found that she was in the shut-up wing—at least so she concluded, in a kind of vestibule. She walked forward on tiptoe, over inches thick of grey, soft dust—the dust of years—and opened the first door. She was now in a fine, well-furnished ante-room—no dust, no cobwebs here. It was in use, though at present empty. A buzz of talking came from the next apartment, and her curiosity and courage bade her step that way.

The door was ajar, the windows closed and curtained with thick red curtains; candles burnt upon a long table in the middle of the room—a table round which twenty or more men were sitting, for the most part young.



Some were dressed in the most studied fashion of the day, others were in working dress; one was a policeman, one a railway-porter, but they all seemed equal now, and intent on some important matter. Writing materials, maps, books, photographs, and pistols lay on the table. Cinderella took in all with one lightning glance.

The president, so to speak, sat at the head of the table, a foreboding looking dark man, with a high, narrow forehead and grizzled hair. He was reading out a list of names—strange, unfamiliar names. His audience paused now and then to interrupt with a remark in a strange, unknown tongue. In the background, in a low seat, his chin in his hands, his eyes on the ground, sat the Dwarf. Could she be awake? Was she not dreaming? Were these men in this luxurious room holding a council—under Miss Jones's prim roof. Who were they? They were neither gamblers nor coiners. "What would the girls say to this?" was her thought.

Prudence whispered that she had better steal away; the door was only two inches ajar. She had not been seen.

Alas! How often is one's fate altered by a sneeze. The dust of the passage had got into her nostrils, and before she had time to realise what was going to happen she had sneezed twice violently. The door had slipped out of her hand, and she stood confessed "a maid in all her charms."

There was an immediate rising, the president himself the first to set the example. As his eyes fell upon Cinderella he became the colour of ashes. He had to hold the table with his hands to steady himself, as in a strange, hoarse voice he demanded in English,—

"What brings you here, Pauline?"

"I live here," she replied, timidly, for she was surrounded on all sides by fierce, angry faces.

"You live here—how?" he asked, now wiping his brow.

"At school. I have lived here for nine years."

"You at school!" with a harsh, sarcastic laugh; "you at school, Pauline Dormanoff."

"I am not Pauline Dormanoff, I am Pauline Rivers," she returned, tremulously.

"But you are her living image. Come!" seizing her roughly by the wrist, "no more of this fooling; I know you too well."

And here he broke out into a strange language, and hissed many hard words to her between his teeth, shaking her violently by the wrist all the time.

Meanwhile she was the centre of an excited and voluble crowd, and the door was locked behind her.

Here was a situation in which to find herself! So much for curiosity! She was evidently the subject of a prolonged and stormy discussion, too, as, after a moment, the leader released her, returned to his seat, and gave an order in an imperative tone, and there was silence.

First one man spoke, then another, pointing at the girl to emphasise whatever they were saying.

The latter, after having made a fiery speech, shook his head in a manner that spoke volumes, waved his hands in the air, and sat down, Cinderella all the while leaning against the wall, not daring to move, whilst her fate was being weighed in the balance.

She gazed from one to the other, and saw no traces of pity; yet they were young men. Their countenances were flint, their eyes fierce and stern and strong.

After a discussion that lasted what seemed to her an interminable time the president raised his voice, and said,—

"Pauline Dormanoff, advance to the table. You are probably not aware that unwittingly you have stumbled into the council chamber of a secret society. We are an assembly of desperate men. To have our existence, our haunts, our appearance discovered means death to one and all of us, and who but a madman would trust a woman with a secret?"

It were better you should perish than twenty," taking up a revolver, and looking keenly at her as he spoke.

"Do you mean to murder me?" she gasped out, with white, parched lips, steadying herself by the back of a chair.

"It will not be murder; there is no such thing in our law. It is merely a judicious removal to benefit the many. It will be instantaneous, I promise you. If you know a prayer, say it."

"There is an alternative," said another man, who sat facing her, with his chin resting on his hands. "Don't kill her. Besides, what should we do with the body? I hate unnecessary bloodshed. Let her take the oath, and become one of us."

Here arose a great clamour, a trebly excited discussion. With her eyes, and ears, and wits preternaturally sharpened she glanced from man to man.

She could see that there were two parties, one headed by the president, who had called her Pauline Dormanoff, and that party wished for her life, and the chief speaker and the most impassioned against her was this man.

He clenched his fists, he gesticulated, he stamped, he shouted. His words appeared to carry weight.

Her trembling knees refused to carry her any longer, and she collapsed on the floor in a dead faint.

When she came to herself she was seated in a chair; a paper and pen were before her. The room still was whizzing round, and the president's voice, as though miles away in a mist, seemed saying,—

"To save your life you become one of us. Your name will be entered in the list, and circulated among the members for their instruction, and you take the oath. Repeat it after me:—

"I, Pauline Rivers, do hereby swear, in the presence of a full council, to become a humble and obedient member of the body called 'The Hand of Justice,' to preserve its secrets as I would my life, to carry out its instructions to the letter, and to be ready, no matter when or where, to lay down my life for the cause."

She murmured the above after him as if in a dream. She signed her name in a huge ledger with trembling, uncertain fingers, and she, Pauline Rivers, school-girl, was a sworn-in member of a body that held the whole of Europe in terror, and that dealt out death and punishment with swift and secret sure strokes.

"Remember that if you fall away from your oath the punishment is death," said the President. "No matter where you are our arms can reach you. We are everywhere. Little do our stolid county neighbours guess that one of our principal branches is in their midst, and has been held in this house for years; that orders go from this table, from this spot, to the Caspian, from Archangel to Egypt, nay, further. The Dwarf there," pointing to the little grey man, "is a dummy. He has been our watchman for years, and you, Pauline, shall share his duties, and keep your inquisitive friends far away from us. Should another follow your example, she shall not be spared. We have no time for sentiment, too much has been lost already. One word. How did you get in? I thought there was no entrance on that side?" nodding his head towards the vestibule.

"I came by a door behind a bookcase in the empty room," she faltered, in a low voice.

"A door! Indeed! That must be seen to at once. This is far too secure a retreat to run risks with. We shall not want you again at present. You may go. No doubt we shall find you employment ere long. A young and pretty girl is always a useful weapon when she is prudent. You will be prudent, for you know the cost of imprudence," looking significantly at the pistol beside him; "and now we need not detain you any longer," making signs to the Dwarf to take her back.

As she passed behind the table, in his wake, all the men who so lately had been clamouring for

her life rose as one, and accorded her each a deep obeisance as she left the apartment.

Walking as if she was in her sleep, they (she and the Dwarf) turned into a passage lighted by a lamp, then they went down a flight of stone steps, then into an underground tunnel, very narrow and very damp; it went beneath the garden and came out in the middle of the wilderness.

A door opened on some concealed steps, and Cinderella found herself on the well-beaten track she had already discovered and was unable to account for. She could account for it now, she thought, with an involuntary shudder.

Here, once more in broad daylight, the Dwarf and she confronted each other for a moment. He paused and looked at her exhaustively; then with a dreadful pantomimic gesture jerked his thumb backwards to indicate the secret society within, and shut his eyes, then nodded empathetically at his companion, and drew his finger across his throat from ear to ear, with hideous suggestiveness.

Was this to be her fate? She would not wonder—she wondered at nothing, her brain seemed stupefied. Seeing the impression he had made, in her blanched face and trembling lips, he laughed a horrid, discordant laugh, like the howl of some wild beast of prey, waddled hastily down the steps, and banged the heavy door after him inside its curtain of creepers, leaving her alone.

No wonder Mary Jane, the housemaid, remarked upon her loss of appetite, and thought somehow that Cinderella did not look herself at all. If she knew the ordeal she had been through so recently she would have wondered less.

Next day Cinderella was in a high fever, and for more than a week she could not leave her bed. Mary Jane was very kind, brought her books and fruit, and sat with her at her sewing. The invalid insisted, too, that she should sleep in her room. She had no wish to see her coadjutor, the Dwarf. Strange to say, at last she was like all the other girls—nervous.

At the shutting of a door she trembled all over like a leaf, a sudden sound she started violently. She slept badly, she talked in her sleep—"very queer talk, indeed," according to Mary Jane; but in about ten days her mind and body recovered their usual state of health and youth. A good strong constitution, large airy rooms, and lovely summer weather, and simple diet wrought the cure.

(To be continued.)

CHINA DOGS.—Have you heard anything about the rage for china dogs? Among fashionable young ladies it's the thing now to make collections of dogs in china, delf, glass, bisque, and everything of that kind, and arrange them on parlour etageres or cabinets. Some people try to get as many dogs as possible, without regard particularly to the kind of dog; others make a point of getting more of one kind than somebody else. A young lady recently informed me that she made every one of her friends present her with a dog costing from five cents upwards, and her collection now, including those she had bought, numbered one hundred and forty-nine. She had them arranged on an etagere all to themselves, and the effect, she said, was "too cunning."

AGED PEOPLE.—Don't neglect the aged, if they reside under your roof. They require much attention. They are usually early risers. Have the room tidy and cheerful, the cloth laid, a bright bit of fire in the grate, the chair ready, and, if possible, a flower on the table. Breakfast ought to be ready, and the tea waiting to be infused, for, remember, old people need breakfast as soon as ever they come down in the morning. It weakens them to wait. Whatever is for breakfast let it be the best that can be procured—the bread a day or two old, the butter the freshest, the eggs rather underdone, the bacon fried, not fried; or, if it be fish, it ought to be sole or haddock, at all events, not a strong, oleaginous fish like mackerel or salmon.

## FOUR-LEAVED CLOVER.

'Neath orchard-boughs this afternoon,  
In July sweet and glowing,  
I stroll where clover-blossoms soon  
Will shrink before the mowing.  
I hear the song of laden bees—  
The merry, merry rovers;  
They homeward fly, as 'neath the trees  
I search for four-leaved clovers.

The rich dark leaves lean gracefully  
Upon their stems so slender,  
The blossoms bend as a golden bee  
Croons out a love-tale tender;  
I smile as slowly on I move,  
And brush the grasses over;  
I'll breathe a wish for one I love,  
When I find the four-leaved clover.

Vain, vain the long slant shadows fall,  
Trefail I but discover;  
I truly think no luck at all  
Is in the four-leaved clover;  
But clusters now, by last ray crown'd,  
Gleam out, and I discover—  
Two dear hands clasp my own: I've found  
My clover—and my lover.

S. G.

## A LOVER AND HIS LASS.

## CHAPTER VII.

For a short time we discoursed on mundane matters, and then, our two baskets being full, I announced my intention of taking them into Prudence, and returning with two empty ones for further gathering. When I returned along the kitchen-garden path some ten minutes later, I saw them, while yet some way off, engaged in eager confabulation, standing close together, where I had left them.

It could be no trivial discussion, of that I felt sure, judging by their attitude and expression. As I neared them, I heard him say distinctly,—

"It is as dead as though it had never been."  
"I doubt if it was ever much alive," she answered, with a dreary kind of smile, as unlike the usual airy carving of her mouth as summer is unlike winter.

"Perhaps not," I heard him say, as I sauntered slowly along the path swinging the baskets, and humming a tune to give them all the time and opportunity I could of saying what they wanted to say to each other. "If there was anything aught you blew it out, remember that!"

"But I can set it alight again," she said in a low, passionate voice, as I reached the first gooseberry bush.

"Never! It's burnt out, quite dead—ah! Miss Celia!"—he went on in a louder tone—"back at last. I hope you've brought some court plaster with you as well as the empty baskets. I have got two scratches several inches long already. Those gooseberry bushes of yours know how to make one smart for robbing them with a vengeance. Uneasy feels the hand that steals a gooseberry, to paraphrase a popular saying."

"I am so sorry," I answered, handing Lella one of the empty baskets, and laying the other down on the ground; "but it's your own fault, you would be useful. Are they so very bad? Let me look at them?"

In obedience to my command he held out his right hand for my inspection. I took it in mine, and looked over it carefully to discover these same scratches, which, according to his statement, were several inches long. At last I did see two little tiny red marks, which might have been torn by the gooseberry thorns.

"Poor thing!" I said, laughing, "what frightful wounds! One wants a magnifying glass to discover the full extent of the awful damage done. I don't think you will want any court plaster, they will heal by looking at them, I should say," letting his hand drop.

"Who was it, when downstairs I fell,  
And caused my cranium to swell,  
That kissed the place to make it well?  
My Celia!"

Chanted Lella from her gooseberry bush, with her usual sparkle, eyeing us rather maliciously, though I fancied at the moment.

I made no response to this brilliant rally, neither did he. Looking back, I fail to see, indeed, what either of us could have said on the subject. I got very red, though, and put on my most dignified demeanour. Not the ghost of a smile did I allow to flit over my countenance, as I picked up my empty basket, and said quietly,—

"I can easily get you a little court plaster, if you think it necessary; aunt always has some in her work-basket."

"Thanks," he answered, quite as soberly as myself; "I really don't think it's at all necessary; they are not such deadly wounds as all that comes to. Probably Miss Neville's remedy would prove as efficacious as anything else. But they are hardly bad enough even for that."

"No," I returned, very shortly indeed, to disabuse his mind that I entertained any idea of hilarity as connected with her remark, and then commenced my gooseberry picking once more, leaving them to carry on their animated conversation with an occasional yes or no from myself.

I had that figurative olive in my mouth all day, and I almost fancy the flavour is not pleasant. I will give it a fair trial though, and not decide too much in a hurry.

Lella's arrival seems to have awoken aunt from her customary purring lethargy. She has been more than usually amiable ever since Saturday evening, calling us her "little kittens," and other fond appellations; in almost a continual state of purr, which denotes that aunt Rachel has had her own way.

For some reason or another she is glad to have Lella at Gable End, and her expressed thought about my dullness without a girl companion is as far from the real reason of her gladness as that I am far from Heaven's gates.

Curiously enough, too, I had another little shock on Sunday night, which set me a-thinking. It came out quite by accident from Lella herself, that it was aunt who wished her to pay the annual visit earlier this summer than usual, and not Lella.

We two girls were looking at a photograph of the scampish brother Richard in her bedroom when I was saying good-night, which she had brought down to show us; and, as I returned it to her, she happened to casually remark that "Dick" didn't want her to come down to Gable End so early, as he, being still in town, would have to find some other housekeeper to undertake the cares of his small domicile for a month or six weeks; in fact, as long as Lella stayed away, which was a difficult undertaking, and one not pleasant to himself. But, she went on, glibly, aunt had written her such a very kind, pressing letter, and seemed so anxious she should come down on the Saturday, that she felt it would be very ungrateful to refuse what aunt evidently wanted her to do.

I opened my eyes when I heard this version of the affair, differing very materially from aunt's to me.

"Oh, ha!" I thought to myself, "Lella has, unwittingly, let the cat out of the bag, to speak vulgarly. I suppose aunt has not had an opportunity, or has forgotten to give Lella a warning not to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, on this occasion, should it happen to arise," but I judiciously held my peace, and merely said,—

"No, aunt never likes her invitations refused. And perhaps it might have seemed ungrateful, as you say."

Aunt Lancelotti is the only one of my kith, kin, or friend, that ever gave me a five-pound note to do as I chose with. For that five pounds I am ever grateful, and her bounden slave, bought and paid for," she returned, with

a shrug. "I would do anything or everything she wanted me to do. Can gratit'ude say more than that? I know it cannot. Yes, that five-pound note bought me, as I said, just now. You see, I do not prize myself very highly, do I?" And then she kissed me on either cheek, a kind of bird's peck, as if she feared my colour might come off with undue friction, and so we parted for the night.

Now, what could have been aunt's reason? for reason she undoubtedly had. I have never known her busy herself unnecessarily, be very sure of that. That reason at present, however, is in the shades, whether it will remain, until aunt gives it full and free permission to emerge thence. However, all to-day she has been sweetness itself—a stroke of barley-sugar. Even Colin Boughton came into the halo of amiability. He was asked to come in whenever he likes, and at whatever time he likes; in fact, if aunt were a younger woman, I might say she almost seemed to make love to him, only I give her credit for possessing more sense.

She made him stay to tea, and he didn't require an infinite amount of pressing either. Even Michael put away his Eugene Aram look, and condescended to make a joke. It ought to have been a happy evening; there was everything to make it so. Aunt "sweet" ed me, and "precious" ed me extraordinarily, keeping me a good deal by her side, winding her wool, and threading her knitting needles, while Colin and Lella found up some old druse, and sung them together.

But it wasn't, at least, not especially happy to me. I felt depressed, not knowing why, and Lella asked me what I had done with my tongue, which was really no business of hers, so I returned rather tartly that I had put it into pickle for a future occasion, at which remark Colin laughed; and said,—

"Bravo, Miss Celia, well reparted!" while Lella darted a little look at me, laden with an infinitesimal portion of spite, for the pride herself upon being in no small degree wittily conversational, and my answer rather swamped her witty endeavour.

The evening at that over, I came up heavily-hearted to bed, Prudence following me. As I nestled down I say,—

"Prue?"

"Well, Miss Celia?"

"Were you ever in love?"

"Lawks-a-me, dearie, for sure I was 'years ago;" she answers, with a smile on her old wrinkled face.

"Was he nice?" I query again, with a view to hearing further particulars of Prue's love affair, for once set my old nurse going, like a fresh wound-up toy, she will babble on until she runs down like an eight-day clock.

"I thought so then," with her head on one side, meditating on the recollection of her sweetheart evidently, "or I shouldn't have liked him so much. He wore a fine lad then, I mind me."

"Yes, of course. Come here, and sit down by the bed. I want to hear all about it. Now, first of all, what did you feel like when you were in love?"

"Feel like?" she echoes, contemptively, sitting down on a chair by my side. "Well, now, it's so long ago, let me think. As to feeling, I know I was times glad, and times sorry, despairing like, dearie; and then something 'ud come to make my heart right fair again. Then I'd just sing one day and cry the next. I was all a sort of a dream, like; I remember, now I think of it. But 'twas many, many years ago now, and maybe I was but a silly young member at best. I know I was mortal jealous of Ben.—Ben Hubbard was his name. Mortal jealous, that I was," ends Prue triumphantly, as if being mortal jealous was, at any rate, highly meritorious and deserving of praise; however much in love she might or might not have been.

"Ah, jealous," I say, slowly, giving my pillow an extra shake, and nodding my head down again, "and what did that feel like?"

"Right bad, dearie," she returns, confidently



"regular nasty, that it did. An all-overish sort of a kind of tigerish feeling, it was. I couldn't bear to see Ben a-talking with any of the mawthers, and then I'd snik, cry, and wish myself dead a hundred times, and him, too, for that matter. I could ha' given all them mawthers a good smack in the face, that I could. Oh, 'twasn't a pleasant thing to feel like that," shaking her white frilled cap tied under her chin with a lavender ribbon, delicately old-fashioned.

"No, Prue, I should say from your description it could not have been an agreeable frame of mind to be in, and all from jealousy, you say?"

"Yes, all nasty, spiteful, jealousy of them mawthers."

"You must have been very fond of Ben Hubbard?" I say, presently, as she gets up from the chair and stands against the bed.

"How was it you never married him?"

"Well, dearie, there were very good reasons for that," and a smile wreathes Prue's ancient features; "a right fair reason, because he never asked me. So I couldn't very well ha' married him against his will, could I?" with a chuckle at the recollection of Ben's backwardness in proposing.

"Well, hardly, under the circumstances, Prue, I do think," I acquiesce, rather sleepily, "but you seem to have got over it very well."

"Ah, but I was right bad for long times after my Ben took up with Sarah Swinch, afore my very face, too, and married her at mid-summer. Mortal bad I was with heartache, dearie. Pray you may ne'er ha' the like. Then I got the place at Gable End, with your grandmother. She was very good, then, such a fine old lady. I think she had a pity for me, for all the village knew I was mad for Ben Hubbard."

"I wonder you didn't marry someone else, Prue," I say, closing my eyes, heavy with sleep.

"I never saw any man I could like better than Ben, though he did treat me right badly," she answers, simply, shading the light from my face with her hand. "'Twas real love, you see, dearie, real, true love, and I couldn't feel in love over. Good-night, Miss Celia!" she adds, more in her usual tone of voice, which had got a little sorrowful towards the close of her narrative. We can none of us recall the past without regret, be it ever so sad. Then drawing my curtains she moves away.

By this time I am very drowsy indeed.

"Goodnight, Prue," I return, as she goes out.

Lord! Jealousy! According to Prue's statement the two seem to go hand in hand. Can one not love without being jealous, I wonder? One would not so much mind the first if one could go without the second. Supposing I should fall in love, it isn't improbable, by any means, because "all things are possible to honest men," the old adage runs. It would be very foolish of me, very foolish, indeed. How sleepy I am. Yes, I do sincerely trust—I may not fall in love—and—be jealous.

## CHAPTER VIII.

"Come on this Love; this little sparrow Love, That fights fools, with his painted bow of lute, Out of their feeble senses."

Time has bound up one whole week in his sleeves of days, weeks, months and years. Time is seven days older than she was, so am I for that matter, but I cannot honestly affirm that I am seven days happier than I was a week back. On the contrary, I am seven days more heavy-hearted.

I could sing with the poet, old Samuel Glover,—

"Oh! I'm not myself at all, Molly Bawn, Molly Bawn!"

Oh! I'm not myself at all, Molly dear! In a hundred little ways I feel that the refrain above is completely applicable to my state of mind—a

dreadful fact which I wonder if others notice as much as I do myself.

And the reason, you very naturally and sensibly ask? That is the hardest part of the question to fitly answer. I cannot tell you plainly it is because of this, or because of that, for I do not know; I can only guess, and guesswork is a very paltry way of getting out of the difficulty; to hazard helpless guesses is only wallowing deeper in the mire of uncertainty.

This seven days has shown me what I suspected from the first, that there exists or has existed at some time of their acquaintance, a story which we outsiders know nothing of. I never gave myself credit for being especially lynx-eyed in matters of this kind, never, perhaps, having had occasion to call them into operation; but it is as plain as a pikestaff.

Celia has taken no small advantage of aunt's permission to come as often as he liked. He has indeed been here almost morning, noon, and night, and I can only conclude that he comes to see Leila. Indeed aunt hinted as much to me quite confidentially the other evening when he and she were singing that touching duet, "Come, wander love with me," while we listened, remarking what a handsome couple they made, and how admirably suited they were to each other; and then it struck me for the first time that perhaps aunt had asked her down to Gable End on purpose to marry her to Colin Boughton, that this was the concealed reason for her wishing Leila to come at once. If so, her wishes seem to be in a fair way of being realized.

Oh! what was it between those two? Can it be love? That they met, loved, and parted, for some sorrowful reason, long long before I saw the brown eyes by the Marling river, and acted my *petite comédie* under the gnarled branches of the hawthorn, older, perhaps, by a century than myself? Oh! if it be really so, may they be quite happy, for I like Colin Boughton, like him very much indeed—as a friend, of course; and we were so very friendly until Leila came. Now there seems a little shadow between us. Is it my fault or his? I wish I knew, that I could remedy it if possible, but somehow I never seem to get a chance of finding out what is amiss, for he leaves me in Michael's complete possession, and hob-a-nobs with Leila.

Another sore point with me, and one which I seemingly cannot resent or contradict, is that Leila will persist in pretending that Michael and I are rapturously in love with each other. I have argued with her privately on the subject, endeavoring to point out and make her comprehend that she is totally wrong; that I am not in love with Michael and never shall be. All to no purpose, she will persist in designating and regarding us as ardent lovers, to my intense annoyance.

Only yesterday we were all standing watching a brood of fluffy-backed ducklings taking to the pond in the orchard, while the mother cackled and remonstrated with puffed feathers on the edge of the bank—I and Michael, she and Colin. As we turned first away from the pond, they following us behind, I overheard her say in a stage whisper to her companion, having evidently indicated us in the foreground,—

"What a sweet thing 'Love's young dream' is. How devoted those two are to one another. It's really quite refreshing to witness something like real love in these days, one meets it so seldom. Don't you think so?"

Now I am not at all devoted to Michael; in fact, there are times of late when I have felt tempted to hate him, myself, Leila, and everyone else in his turn.

Hearing this encomium upon our supposed love, I felt a savage instinct to turn sharply round there and then, and defying etiquette give her a bit of my mind; but second thoughts, which they say are always best, showed me how undignified a proceeding this would be. Besides, what did it matter, after all?—though I strained my ears to catch Colin's answer.

"I suppose it is," he said, quietly, in his

ordinary tone of voice, neither higher nor lower than usual. "I'm not much judge of these matters myself."

"You used to be," she went on, low-voiced. "Used I?" he retorted, quite aloud. "Ah! I was young and foolish then, I suppose,"—with a laugh—"I have put away all childish things now, done with all the frivolities of the tender passion," to which she made no reply.

But I noticed that after this speech of Leila's, Colin seemed purposely to leave me to Michael as my lawful and particular Lubin. Once or twice I caught him looking at me penetratingly with those clear brown eyes of his, as much as to ask me if it were true; and was he not good in taking Leila off our hands as an unwelcome third? But by that time my stubborn, rebellious heart had taken umbrage, and so I let him think what he chose, with no word of mine to undeceive him.

Last night I looked at my silver sixpence, reposing in the velvet drawer of my dressing-case.

"Little sixpence!" I began, taking it out of the drawer and laying it in the palm of my hand, gazing at it with eyes not far removed from the region of tears, "if you are going to make me feel so miserable I shall wish I had never seen your shining little face, and I don't want to do that yet—not just yet awhile. I was so proud of you when I earned you. Don't make me unhappy, please—please don't."

By this time there were two big tears, one in each eye, dimming my sight, and making my sixpence looked blurred and indistinct. I must not cry. Why should I? It is so horribly foolish, and about nothing—too absolutely nothing—I kept on saying over and over again to myself. One thing I determined on, and that was, that I would fling away all melancholy, and from then show myself happy and jolly once more—the cricket, Celia Lascelles, of yore.

This afternoon we are all going over to help in a school treat, given at East Marling Rectory, after which we shall spend the evening at the Barlow's, and I mean to carry my excellent resolve into early execution, flinging dull care away.

On arriving we find a concourse of village children assembled in the meadow adjoining the rectory garden, part of Mr. Barlow's glebe land, engaged in games of varied and entrancing delight, watched over by smiling school-teachers, Mr. Barlow, Miss Hannah, and Colin Boughton. Leila and I join in. Here we go round the blackberry bush, "pet," and "Tom Tiddler's ground," to the manifold and unceasing delight of the children, and frequent hand-clappings from Colin looking on. At last, tired and hot, Leila comes and flings herself down on the grass under a big purple beech, near the spectators, and Miss Hannah walks me off to help her cut up cake for the tea, which is one of the greatest glories of the whole afternoon.

She gives me a cake knife and huge china dish to put the cake on when out in thick wedges, while she tackles another of equally large dimensions.

"My dear little Celia," she begins, as we sit by the long tea-table, covered with good things suitable for the children's palates, "what have you done to Colin?"

Her question takes me so aback for the moment that I cease cutting the cake, and, knife in hand, gaze wide-eyed at my questioner.

"I, Miss Hannah! What have I done to Mr. Boughton?"

"Yes, you," smiling at my evident surprise.

"What have you said or done to Colin?"

"Nothing. That is, nothing that I know of," I amend, nervously, for perhaps unwittingly I may have said or done something which has vexed him. "What could I do?" eagerly watching her face for an answer.

"That is what I want to know, you naughty little thing," shaking her white head at me. "I am certain you have been unkind to poor Colin."

"Why, what is the matter with him? He looks well enough," I say, thinking how

merrily he laughed a little while back when Leila and I were playing at Tom 'Tiddler's ground' with the school-children. He did not seem out of spirits when he clapped his hands in approval.

"Ah! dear, when you are as old as I am you will have learnt that looks do not always tell tales. The world is taught to wear a mask very often, believe me, and we should never judge a smile according to its sweetness, or a laugh for its mirthful chime. Colin has said nothing to me, but I have studied young people too much not to know that there is something 'rotten in the state of Denmark.' He has been quite glum the last few days, doing nothing but whiffing at his cigarettes, or mooning up and down the river when he has not been at Gable End. All his usual powers of conversation seem to have left him, and he's always in a day-dream. Now, it's quite unlike Colin, and there must be a reason for it all. Now, what do you say is the matter with him?" and she glances from under her spectacles over the table at me.

I have always been so open with dear Miss Hannah, telling her my small secrets, woes, and troubles, that it comes quite naturally to me to confide my thoughts into her safe and sympathetic keeping, so I look back at her kindly old face, and say quietly,—

"I think I know what is the matter with Mr. Boughton. He is—in love!"

"Oh!" she rejoins, dropping her gaze to the cake she is cutting up, "is that it? So he has already confided in you as to what ails him?" with a slightly amused smile.

"No"—shaking my head dolefully—"no, he did not confide in me. I found it out by myself," and I heave a small, unobtrusive sigh as I carve away at the plum cake before me.

"Clever little Celia. So you found it out, did you? Now, to tell you the truth, I fancied it was that for the last week, only I was not sure about it."

My heart gives a sink downward, for until this moment I have hardly realised the truth of my own thoughts. Miss-Hannah's assertion that it has been visible to her eyes quenches the last spark of doubt hitherto remaining in my mind. It is all as clear as the noonday now. Aunt will have her way.

"I wonder now if you know who Colin is in love with?" queries Miss Hannah, after a pause, piling up the wedges of cake in a pyramid form, and keeping a steadfast gaze on the dish of richness before her.

"Yes, I know that too," I answer, with ever so small a heart pang; "it is—Leila."

"Leila Neville!" she repeats, glancing up quickly at me, as if questioning whether I really meant what I said. For one second I fancy she intends contradicting me, but I am mistaken, for she only says meditatively, as if coming over the question in her mind's eye, "Oh, so you think Colin is in love with Leila Neville, do you?"

"Yes, I am almost sure of it, Miss Hannah!"

"Well, now, strange to say, I can't agree with you, dear Celia, at all. It does not strike me that Colin's heart is gone in that direction in the slightest degree. Of course I may be wrong, but I do not think so," adjusting her spectacles over her eyes.

"Not! Why, I quite made up my mind on that score."

"So you have thought about it then?" she queries, once more, with a twinkle of merriment coming into her sweet old face.

"Oh, yes! ever so many times," I assent, quickly. "You see, they knew each other before they met at Gable End after Leila came down to stay with us, and somehow I cannot help thinking they must have been lovers. I cannot exactly tell you why I think so, but I do," lifting my gaze from the table-cloth, which I have been studying attentively, while I spoke.

"My dear little girl, if, as you say, they were lovers once upon a time, that is all the more reason why they should not be so now, especially as time has come between;

and let me tell you there is nothing in all this wide world so difficult to take up again as a broken thread. I cannot fancy Colin's heart broken about your friend Leila Neville—she is hardly his style, I should have thought. But I must get poor Colin in a confessional mood some day, and hear all about it from him. I am sure he will tell me if I ask him; only, as a rule, I never like to force young peoples' confidences. If they like to enlighten me, well and good; if not, I do not evince any overweening curiosity to hear. I find it's always better to let them alone in that kind of thing. But I confess I should never have thought what you say was correct."

"Can you doubt it, Miss Hannah. Look there!" and I direct her attention to the distant purple beech tree, where Leila, lying on the grass, near where Michael and Mr. Barlow sit chatting, looks up at Colin leaning his broad back against the trunk of the tree, fanning her with a huge dock leaf tied on the end of a willow twig—his attitude of devotion, Leila's upturned glowing face.

Surely—surely they are lovers.

As I look Colin turns his head in our direction, perhaps with some vague instinct that he is being watched, for instinct sometimes does warn us in this manner. Seeing both our heads turned towards them, he stops his fanning, evidently says something to Leila, who, springing to her feet, they both saunter over to us at the tea-table. I have finished my cake-cutting as they reach us, and laying the knife down, fold my hands in my lap.

"How industrious you are, Miss Celia; how those children will presently bless your labours. And what enormous appetites they must be endowed with to be able to consume all the goodies set out for them. Are you too tired to come and have a swing; my muscles require exercise, they have not had any work for a long time now," he ends almost plaintively, I think.

I flush up with pleasure, and am about to assent joyfully, when my eye falls on Leila. She has heard the proposition, and evidently does not approve of it. The corners of her mouth droop, and a peculiar expression in her eyes says quite as plainly as words, "I don't wish my lover to swing anyone but myself. There must be no trespassers on my preserves."

I should love a swing above all things, and I should like Colin to swing me, but would it be fair to Leila? Perhaps not.

With a small sigh to myself, I answer staidly,—

"Thanks, very much indeed, but I don't think I'll have a swing just now. It's—it's too hot," casting about for a valid excuse, anything better than none.

His face falls—that at least I am sure of. He is disappointed. I wish now I had said yes! despite Leila's mute dissent. Having said no, however, I must, of course, abide by it.

Then Leila's clear voice says flippantly,—

"You need not have taken the trouble to ask, Mr. Boughton. Don't you know that Celia never cares for anyone to swing her but Michael; it's a vested right. Now I adore swinging quite as much as she does, and I am more amenable, for I don't mind a jolt who swings me, so you can exercise your muscles on my behalf. I don't suppose it will make the slightest difference so long as they are exercised, will it?" clasping her plump hands together fervourously under his gaze.

"No, not if you wish it," he answers, somewhat shortly though I fancy; and without another pro or con the two saunter away towards the orchard where that entrancing swing hangs from the walnut, rearing its giant head above the punier pear and apple trees, laden with their green fruit, leaving Miss Hannah and I once more *tit-tit* by the long tea-table.

My body stays behind truly, but something belonging to me—my heart, perhaps—goes with them. Reluctantly I watch those two retreating figures until they turn into that lattice

gate. How dearly should I have liked to go too; but at any rate, I ought to feel a wholesome consolation that I have done my duty.

I awake from my cogitations to find Miss Hannah regarding me inquisitively over her spectacles.

"Why didn't you let Colin swing you, dear?" she asks gently.

"Because—oh, because—well, I don't know," smoothing the frills of my sleeve.

"He was quite disappointed at your refusal."

"Do you really think he was?" I query, eagerly, my face lighting up.

"Of course I do. I am sure he wanted to swing you very much. I think you acted under a wrong impression in refusing, unless you did not care to be swung."

"Oh, but I did care, Miss Hannah," I respond, quickly; "there's nothing I should have liked better, only—only—" hesitating.

"Only what, you queer morsel of feminine contrariety?" she says, smiling.

"I thought he would prefer swinging Leila!" I confess, honestly.

"You very silly little Celia!" she says, again, rising from her seat, and coming over to my side, lays one hand caressingly on my shoulder. "Now, do you know what I should do if I were in your place?"

"What!" I ask, looking up into her face, and thinking what a blessing it is to be old and tender and sympathetic all at once. When I am old may I be just such a dear, old lady as Miss Hannah is.

"Well, were I you, I should just get up from my chair, walk over the meadow to the garden orchard, and ask Colin to swing me."

"Would you?" eagerly; "but, perhaps, he might not care to now, after being once refused!" I end, dubiously, all my fears returning.

"I don't fancy he would. At any rate, I should try. No never hurts anyone; and, remember, nothing drops pat into our mouths without the asking. Now, take my advice. Come, off with you"—as I hesitate—"while I go and see what Stephen and your cousin are chatting about," and, giving me a gentle push, away she trots in the opposite direction.

I stand irresolute a minute or two, wishing so much to follow her advice, and yet not liking to. It is not the matter of eating humble pie one atom which lies uppermost in my mind, and affects my resolution. It is not pride which creates this horrible vacillation; but the remembrance of the old adage, "two is company, three none." I have found out the truth of it myself, and I wish to do unto others as I would be done by. And yet Miss Hannah's advice is very pleasant to contemplate. Shall I, or shall I not? Helplessly indecisive, I appeal to nature by picking a golden buttercup growing near, and pluck the yellow, shiny petals off one by one, as Gretchen did, murmuring yes! no! as each petal falls to the earth.

Momentous flower, tell me true, shall I go or stay?

The buttercup finally says yes, which means I am to go, so flinging away the robbed flower and stem, I walk slowly forward towards the lattice gate. Leila and Colin are so engrossed as I reach the other side of the walnut-tree that they give no heed to me, or hear my footsteps over the soft, long grass. He is not swinging her—though she sits idly in the swing—but standing close, holding one of the chains which support the swing, looking at her, while she gazes up into those brown eyes of his, seemingly unmindful of aught else on the glorious summer day.

It is a pretty picture, say what one would. It may not be a pleasant or agreeable picture, but it is certainly a pretty one, and I recognise the fact with almost a heart pang. How true it is that "two is company!" Am I to be a marrying third, and spoil the harmonious duet?

She seems to be asking him something by her attitude of eagerness, or answering some question of his—the momentous question of



all others, perhaps. More than likely I should say—then, I see her suddenly raise one of her hands lying in her lap, and lay it on his arm, holding the chair, with a kind of beseeching gesture.

He lets it lie there one moment, then takes it gently in his other hand, and lays it again on her lap.

They are lovers, I knew it, I was certain of it. No, I will not disturb them, far better not; they will only hate me in their hearts for my unwelcome intrusion upon their bliss. Besides, Colin would not care to swing me now. Lovers—lovers—I echo to myself, with a heart-throb, as I turn silently away from the old walnut shade, and pass again through the lattice door into the garden, where I wander up and down aimlessly for a few minutes longer, and then go in search of Miss Hannah, for the children's tea will be ready, I should think, and she will want help.

"Prue!" I say, when night comes, and I am once more in my Gable End bedroom, with the door well shut to; "let me cry. My heart aches so, I must cry the ache away;" and laying my head on her ample, cotton-covered breast, I shed a few bitter tears.

"My dear Miss Celina! what's to do?" she asks, smoothing my roughened hair, letting me cry in peace, for she is used to my vagaries and changes of temperament. "There now, surely you've cried enough? Dry your eyes, my dearie; you're right tired, that's it, playing about with all them children in the sun. Get into bed, my chicken, and go to sleep, you're right tired, I can see."

With a sob or two I dry my eyes, and raise my head.

"Yes, Prue! I'm tired, very tired, indeed. That's it. A good night's rest will set me all right again—rest and sound sleep. My head aches, not my heart. I said heart I know, but I meant head. Yes! I am very, very tired, dear old Prue, you are right."

When she has gone I jump out of bed, and patter to the window, across which hangs a chintz curtain. I draw it back, and look out into the night—the moon has hardly risen yet, and all the garden lies in shadow, like my heart, I think, sorrowfully—gazing out at the infinite calmness and silent softness of the summer night.

No Celina, I commence sadly, you are not tired, not a bit. It is not weariness which causes you to shed tears so childishly. Be very sure of that. Come, now, be honest with yourself. Own the truth to your heart of hearts. You are not tired; you are—jealous!

The very night seems to echo my thought. Jealous Celina it cries plainly enough, and I know it speaks truly. It is as true as that moon, noon, and dewy eve come round in ceaseless turn; what can be sorer than that until eternity? Ah, Colin! I wish you had never come, or Leila had never come, it matters not much which, and I do wish I wasn't such a horribly, disgracefully jealous girl, and a chilly one, too, by-the-bye. Midnight meditation, lightly garbed as I am, is not I find conducive to warmth; and I believe I hear a mouse nibbling in the wainscot. I hate mice. I hope he won't come out for his evening stroll before I get back into bed; horrid little nibbler!

With a tiny shiver I draw the curtain once more, and snuggle down into the depths of my four-poster. Jealousy does not make me any braver than I was, I find, and though I am only a country mouse myself, I do not love my species as I ought. That nibbler shall have a nice little trap set for him to-morrow. I'll have that mouse, though I can't have Colin, at least I mean to try—for the mouse of course. I'm not so sure I'd have Colin, even if I could. I don't think I would, but I am not sure. One can never be sure of anything, seemingly, in this world; and one's own heart least of all. At least, I find it so.

(To be continued.)

## OPALS AND DIAMONDS.

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### CHAPTER XV.

It was true all O'Hara said—he would have died for her. He loved her so dearly, with all the passion and fervour of his fiery Celtic nature. What were other women to him? Nothing. He would never again glow and thrill with passion at the glance of a bright eye, the touch of a soft lip—all that was over for him for ever. Life stretched before him a terrible waste—an awful wilderness. All hope and joy was wrung from it; a dead blank faced him. He knew that he had nothing to look forward to, save a future full of pain and dark despair. Each day would rise for him dull, dreary, tasteless, unblest by the presence of the only being who could have glorified them, turned his existence into one long pleasure.

How could she have forgotten him and all his wealth of devoted affection so soon, he wondered? Absent from her he had kept her memory green within his heart, had dreamt dreams in which she alone figured—thought always of her, and she had forgotten him in less than six months, proved herself false to the core; had fled away with another man, sending not a single word to him, to warn him of what was coming to soften the blow of her desertion.

Oh! it was bitter! bitter! The man's very blood seemed to turn to gall, as he realised what the loss meant for him—how cruelly he had been deceived! A mad, murderous wrath surged in his heart, a wild desire for revenge, a horrible hatred of the man who had won her from him.

"Who—who—is it?" he asked, hoarsely, raising his head, and looking at the woman who stood opposite him, cool, calm, regarding him as a doctor might an animal under vivisection.

"Who is what?" she rejoined, knowing perfectly well what he meant.

"Who—is it—she—has married?"

"What do you want to know for?"

"That is my affair. Will you tell me?"

"Well—I suppose so if you want to know. If I don't somebody else will."

"Who is it then?"

"Sir Lionel Molyneux."

"Ah! Caught by a title and the length of his money bags!" he said, giving vent to a dreadful mirthless laugh—worse, far worse, than tears—"and the grand houses. Perhaps if I had had the good fortune to be born a marquis with a long rent-roll, and an ancestral seat, possessed of all the means of gratifying her vanity, she might have been true to me."

"I think not," rejoined Maud, feeling that she could add another pang to those he was enduring.

"Why not? One man with plenty of money is just as good as another to a woman of her sort."

"I hardly think so. She really loved Sir Lionel, with her whole heart and soul; for you she entertained a mere girlish evanescent affection."

O'Hara's hands clenched at her words. It was so hard to hear this, to know he had never possessed her love—only a luke-warm, weak apology for it—after having poured out the treasure of his at her feet. It went like a fiery stab of pain through him, searing his soul, leaving him more reckless—more desirous of revenge.

"Perhaps you are right," he agreed, quietly, controlling himself with a mighty effort; "and if you are it may be all the better for the man who has been base enough to steal her from me."

"Don't blame Sir Lionel," she said, quickly. "Why not? And if I don't blame him, who shall I censure? You?"

He put the question at random, little knowing how near the mark he was, for he was very free from conceit, and never dreamt that Maud had cared for him so much in the old days when he first came to Wingfield, and that his

transferring his attentions to her sister would make her so bitter against her.

"By no means," she answered, smiling suavely, though her cheek lost some of its rich bloom. "Don't blame anyone, only fate."

"And why not Sir Lionel?"

"Because he did not know that she was engaged in a way, did not know that she had a lover before himself."

"I see. It was all kept from the rich man lest he should take fright and run away," he said, scornfully.

"There was no fear of his running away; he was too much in love for that."

"In that case you might have dealt fairly by me—have given me a chance. Why was I not told?"

"Well," she answered, slowly; not wishing to acknowledge her own guilt, for there was an ugly, sombre light burning in O'Hara's eyes that meant mischief to someone. "You know what Maggie is? She never cares to do anything that will entail pain on others, and—"

"Does she not?" he broke in, fiercely, unable to restrain the unquenchable sense of wrong that possessed him. "Her conduct hardly looks like it. She has entailed a life-long misery on me."

"Don't be too hard on her, Terence."

"Too hard on her? Oh, Heaven! As though anything would be bad enough for a woman who lets a man lay his heart at her feet and then tramples on it, killing all that is best in him—turning the sweet well-springs of life to gall and wormwood, condemning him to an existence full of misery. Too hard on her! No I won't be too hard, but I will have my revenge, and it shall be ample."

"Nonsense, Terence. You are talking rubbish," said Maud, quickly, laying her hand on his arm.

"It is no nonsense. I mean it," he retorted grimly, shaking off her touch.

"You can't. You are indulging in heroics," she went on, eagerly and glibly, though she was very white, and her hands shook like aspen leaves. "People don't have revenge in the nineteenth century."

"Other people may not, I intend to."

"Why should you? The child was sorry, very sorry."

"Perhaps."

"She could not help loving another man. Love comes unsought."

"It does, curses on it!" he cried, wildly.

"Then you should forgive her."

"Perhaps I may someday, when my revenge is satisfied."

"To forgive, really, you should forego revenge."

"I can't do that," he rejoined, with an awful hollowness in his voice. "It is all I have to live for now."

"You might have heaps of other things to live for if you chose."

"What—what has she left?"

There was inexpressible dreariness in his tone.

"You might love again."

"Never!"

"Oh, yes, you might, persuaded Maud, recovering her usual insouciance, "and a woman possibly that will suit you a great deal better than Maggie would."

"By the way," she added, a moment later, "she left the ring you gave her with me to return to you. Here it is," she continued, drawing it from her pocket and offering it to him. "Won't you take it?"

"No, it would be useless to me."

"I should advise you to. May come in useful you know, to give to some other fickle fair one. There it is. I don't want the trumpery thing," and she tossed it towards him with an air of disdain. The words and action seemed to sting him with a fiery pain, great as though she had thrust thorns into his wounded, aching heart.

He ground the ring down into the earth under an angry heel, battering out of all shape and form the shabby little love-token; then

without another word he strode swiftly away, and with the anguish of a wild despair, feeling that Heaven and hope had deserted him.

His strength and vigour seemed to have left him—he went along in a blind, faltering way, and the woman watching him saw him stumble as he went recklessly on. Out of the little wicket gate, down the rural lane, past Stretton's oak, where he had parted from Maggie a few short months before, on, on into the outer world, which was destined to be such a joyless one to him for ever and aye.

"Glad he's gone," soliloquised Maud, as his figure became lost in the shadows of approaching evening. "Didn't like the look of him at all. Dangerous, very, just now. Hope he'll get over it. It will be more than awkward if he turns up here and molests Maggie. He has the game, pretty well in his own hands, as Lionel knows nothing about him, and if he chooses can make things extremely unpleasant for all parties. I must manage not to be found out though. That would never do. I don't want to receive the benefit of his wrath, and it would cause disagreeable complications with Maggie and her husband. What a fool he was to have pinned his faith on a woman—they are not to be trusted."

"I found she was false, tho' she promised me fairly. Sag hay down, ho down, darry down too. And women, I know, are like weathercocks—rarely."

They're fixed to one point, so coquettish they be."

"Yes, we are like weathercocks, and I don't suppose we can help it," and continuing the song, she went slowly up to the house, gathering some flowers on her way, and then with one look at the swiftly darkening sky she went into the old parlour, and drew the curtains, and heaped the fire high with coal, and ensconced herself comfortably in the great Chippendale chair before the fire, sipping the tea Anne brought her, putting the little Lion dog's ears, as he sat on her lap, building her castles in the air, and putting aside all thought of the man who had just left her, whose life she had ruined and laid waste, whose hopes she had marred, whose future she had made bear and barren.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### WELCOME HOME.

"Well, Laura, after all you will be disappointed. They are not coming home until after Christmas," remarked Maud one morning, some three months later.

"I am very sorry to hear it. My poor people will suffer for it this hard winter. I hoped Sir Lionel would return soon and co-operate cordially in all our plans and endeavours to ameliorate the condition of his tenants, and lessen their sufferings during this bitter weather."

"Well, he is going to do so."

"How?"

"By sending money. Maggie says," continued Maud, referring to a letter that lay before her on the table, "that there is a hundred pounds at the bank in Ingheld to papa's credit, and we are to use it as we think best, and go to Green for an unlimited supply of coals and blankets."

"How good of him! That is a grand Christmas box for his people."

"Yes," remarked Kate, looking up from the work she was occupied with, "we shall be able to do a great deal with such a sum as that. His absence will not be felt."

"Where are they now?" she inquired, a minute later.

"At Naples. Listen what she says. What a lucky girl she is."

"We are still here; it is such a lovely place. Last week we went over to Cetara, a fishing town about forty miles off, in the Bay of Salerno. I shall never forget it as I have seen it. It was evening, and the last glory of sunset was flashing the vine-climbed hills, the white houses, and the lofty cliffs with a rosy glow, flaming through a hollow of the hills,

lighting up the restless, glittering sea, and the great black rocks that reared on high their shaggy crests, dyeing them with a thousand rainbow hues, holding in check for a time the purple mists of approaching twilight; while over the water, borne on the balmy breeze, came the sweet, and monotonous of the fisher-folk, singing as they cast their nets around. We only stayed a few days, as everything there is rather primitive, but I was quite ready to leave. We start tomorrow for Nice, and then we go to Monaco, which we have not yet visited; and, as I am curious to see the viols, Lionel is going to take me. We go to Paris for Christmas and the *tour de France*, and then to Rome for the Carnival. We have an invitation from the Princess Maccabetti to go to her balcony, where we shall see everything. It won't let me join the throng on the Corso, though we have been offered seats in more than one carriage, so I shall have to content myself in the Princess's balcony, and put the crowds beneath with content from that elevated perch. I wish you were with us now. I am sure you would like Nice. The Promenade des Anglais is so lovely, with its luxuriance of bloom, on a brilliant day—and almost every day is sunny here; in these northern climes—with a thick ground of orange trees, ilex groves, and laurels, and a sky of deep glowing saffron, very different from the pale blue or leaden grey we are accustomed to in old England—"

"I wish I was with her," commented Maud, breaking off for a moment, and then beginning again further down.

"I am going to order you a dress ready in Paris. What would you like? Write and tell me, and ask Kate and Laura if theirs shall be 'going away' ones. It is so generous, I have more money than I know what to do with; therefore don't scruple to tell me exactly what you would like, and if the girls want any little nick-nacks for their trousseaus let me know—"

"How kind!" murmured the bride-elect.

"Let me know also," went on the letter—"when the day is definitely fixed, for of course we shall return to England and be present at the ceremony. I hope, however, that it will not be until the end of February or beginning of March, because if we have time after we leave Rome, we want to go to Vallambrosa. Li has told me so much about the convent, and the crane at the Foresteria, who, he says, is so much like a witch, that he always expects to see her mount astride a broomstick, and go flying through the air, that I am dying to visit the place, so be sure and let me know soon. And with love from both of us to papa and all."

"Ever your affectionate sister,

"Maudie."

"Now, my dears," said Maud, briskly, as she folded up the epistle; "make up your minds what you will have by to-morrow, as I intend to write to her ladyship then. And am I to tell her definitely that the happy day is fixed for the 6th of April?"

"Yes," assented the others.

And so a letter went off to Nice containing the news, and a description of the dresses required; and Maggie was so pleased at her presence not being required in England till April, and at being able to go to Vallambrosa, that she gave a very large order to M. Worth for gowns for her sisters, and was lavishly generous in the way of boots and gloves and perfumes—no lavish, indeed, that when they arrived at Pollestrove she found herself with only a few shillings in the dainty purse she carried, and had to ask some from her husband.

"How much?" he inquired, with a smile.

"Oh, five pounds will be ample," she answered; "you know at Molyneux I shall not want to spend money."

"I think you had better have twenty. You will have frequent calls on your generosity there, and will have to play the part of Lady Bountiful."

"Shall I?"

"Of course, my love. Do you think you will be equal to the part?"

"I shall try," she replied, with a little sigh; "but I was never very good at that sort of thing. I think I am too lazy."

"Little does it matter," laughed her husband, pinching the blooming cheek pressed against his arm; "and you shall continue to be lazy if you like. I must get a cousin to assist your father, and shall choose a married one, whose wife will dispense your charities, and take all trouble off your shoulders in that way."

"That is good of you, Li. Dad is getting rather old now, and finds the work some heavy."

"I suppose so; and he will feel lonely, too, when Maud comes. Clinton will be back to claim her as soon as he can possibly get leave."

"Yes. You mean the cousin and his wife to live at the Rectory?"

"Yes. Do you think it would be a good plan?"

"Capital, if you could get a really religious, active-minded man, and a woman who would take an interest in parish matters. The poor folk in the village will miss Laura terribly."

"Yes; she is a regular good Samaritan."

"I wish I was like her."

"How do you mean?"

"As energetically over the distribution of comforts to the needy—able to go into their cottages and find out their wants, and read to them, &c."

"I am afraid, dear," rejoined the Baronet, with a slight smile, "that you would hardly have time for all that. Your position entails many duties of another kind. You will have to entertain a great deal, and you will find that will leave you little leisure."

"Will it?" said Maggie, somewhat relieved, feeling much better able to play the rôle of hostess than that of Lady Bountiful.

"Indeed it will."

"Are you glad to go back?" he asked later on in the day, as they drove through the beautiful grounds that lay around the Hall, amid the cheers and shouts of the tenants and the children of the village, who tossed garlands of violets and snowdrops into the carriage, and waved primroses and spring blossoms along the road, while a merry chime rang from the old church steeple, and the birds sang gaily, and the sunny sunshine made it almost balmy as summer.

"Very glad," she answered, with a joyous smile. "It is your home and mine—how tenderly she accented the word—and I love it better than any place in the whole world."

"Better than Rome, with all its treasures and beauties?"

"Yes."

"Better than Nice, and its glowing sky and luxuriance of bloom and blossom?"

"Yes."

"Better than Cetara, the little place you were so much about?"

"Yes; even better than Cetara, and is it not worthy of my best affections? Is it not a grand old place? Have we seen anything to equal it in all our travels?"

"Perhaps not, love," he assented, pleased at her admiration of his ancestral home, as it looked as the peaked gables of the gray, time-worn building, which was looking its best beneath the beautifying rays of the spring sun, as indeed was all around.

The soft wind was luring the bee from its hiding place, by opening in sheltered nooks little clusters of fragrant violet, and putting honey in the baskets of the dazzling gorse flowers. Myriads of tiny green leaf-buds were peeping out; the little gaisies were shaking their silver frills amid the springing grasses; the burning gold of the crocus made a warm glow, amid the white, cloudy snowdrops; the speckled thrush and the yellow-bellied blackbird were calling to each other; a hawk was singing far beyond the clouds; the rocks in the tall beaches were busy building, and their cawing and wrangling almost drowned the notes of the tuneful chorister, soaring up—up into space.

"There seems to be quite a regiment waiting to welcome us," remarked the Baronet, as



they drew nearer, and could see the figures on the terrace.

"Yes, they are going to give you a warm welcome."

"May it be a happy home-coming to you, dearest," he murmured.

"And to you, dear Lionel," she answered, lifting the starry eyes he loved to gaze at to his.

"Thanks," and he pressed her little fingers with one hand, while he lifted his hat with the other, in response to the salutes and cheers he was receiving; and then, as the carriage stopped, he made a short speech, thanking his people for their kindly greeting and warm welcome, and giving his arm to his bride led her to the terrace where the Dowager Lady Molyneux and Eunice and Mr. Randal and his daughters stood.

"Welcome home, my son," said his mother, kissing him, and scanning eagerly his handsome face, which looked as bright and happy as she could wish to see it.

"Thanks, dear mother," he replied, stooping to kiss her cheek.

"And you, Maggie," to his wife, who stood blushing and smiling, a slight, girlish shape in rich velvet and costly furs, looking like anything but a titled matron.

"Thanks," she murmured also, after a swift embrace, turning to her father and sisters, who soon bore her away from the bustle and tumult outside, to the quiet of the blue boudoir.

"How do you like being married?" asked Kate, after the bride was divested of her cables and "five o'clock tea" brought in, and she lay resting amid the silken cushions of a deliciously easy chair.

"I like it very well," she replied, smiling at the three eager faces.

"Of course you do," said Maud, promptly: "who wouldn't, under the same circumstances? I should, I know. An adoring husband—heaps of money—everything you can possibly desire."

"Yes, everything I can possibly desire," she echoed, gazing dreamily out at the park where the deer barked, and at the sweep of woodland, and the silvery sheen of the river.

"Lucky girl! I hope I shall be equally blessed."

"I hope you will, Maud, and I see no reason why you should not be," Clifford Clinton is sure to make a most kind and indulgent husband."

"Yes, I suppose so," agreed his fiancée, "still I shall not be 'my lady.'"

"You can't have everything," rejoined Maggie, with a sweet rippling laugh, full of glad content.

"Why not? you have everything."

"Yes, but I am particularly fortunate—exceptionally blessed. Clinton is rich, handsome, amiable. What more could any woman desire?"

"Well, she could desire more, but—"

"But," broke in Kate, "she should not do so. Those three things ought to be quite enough to satisfy any woman."

"Then I presume you are satisfied?"

"Quite so. Though Mr. Thomson is by no means handsome, or so rich as you intended, still I am quite content, and thankful that I have won his love."

"Yes, of course," grumbled Maud, "that is always the way with you. If you only possessed two husbands, and somebody stole one, you would be very much obliged that they didn't take both, and congratulate yourself thereon."

"Naturally."

"Isn't that the proper thing to do, asked?"

Lady Molyneux.

"Yes, I suppose so, only I could never bring myself to be charitable and contented frame of mind. I should be as much as my last gown and try to discover the thief, in order to punish him."

"Waste of time. Kate's is the best mode of action. And now tell me all the news."

"The Comte de Villefille, Henriette Clifford,

Mr. Thornton, and one or two others, and Lady Molyneux and Eunice."

"My mother and Eunice!" exclaimed Maggie, calling her by the endearing title she liked, "staying here! I am surprised at that, and the Dover House only a couple of miles away."

"They don't live at the Dover House."

"Don't live there! Why not?"

"It is rather damp, and has been so long unused that they thought it was better not to."

This was not the truth. Lady Molyneux was afraid to live at the quiet old house among the woods, afraid that her son, who was very much attached to her, and who would often go to see her, might during one of his visits discover the padded room, and so find out that there was madness in the family, and he knew but too well that the knowledge would prove fatal to his sanity. Brooding over it, thinking of it, dreadfully, would make him a lunatic. The doctors said his only chance was to keep him in ignorance of the dreadful malady which threatened him.

"Where have they gone to, then?" asked Maggie, after a pause, during which a cloud had fallen over her bright face, and stolen into her violet eyes.

"They have taken the Boscary."

"They have not gone very far."

"No, not much more than a mile."

"I wish they had remained here. I feel as though I had driven them out."

"What nonsense! You are his wife, and Lady Molyneux very properly said that young married people are better alone, without any of their relatives to interfere with them, at any rate, at first. And you need not pity them, for the Boscary is a delightful place. The high priest badge that surrounds it conceals it from view. I had no idea it was so charming. Just picture to yourself a long, low house, with porch, walls, and windows covered with roses, that cluster round and peep in at the narrow casements, and climb up even to the pointed gables, mingled with honeysuckle and great fuschias nailed against the time-worn grey stones, and low-celled, black-beamed, old-fashioned rooms, and a garden with a smooth grassy lawn, and full of lovely flowers."

"The description is perfect—quite an Arcadian residence."

"Quite," assented Maud, glibly.

"All the same, though I would rather have had them here. There is plenty of room in this vast place. We should not have interfered with each other much."

"No. Well, some day I deprecate you will have your mother-in-law to come to live with you."

"When will that be?"

"When Eunice marries."

"Is she going to be married?"

"Not that I am aware of."

"Haven't the Comtes proposed yet?"

"He may have proposed, but she has evidently not accepted him, as no engagement has been announced."

"Is he still as much in love?"

"More so, and I can't understand why she won't have him. He would be a very good match even for her. I believe he has a splendid place at Marseilles."

"Yes, Lionel has stayed there with him. He is quite a millionaire. Keeps yachts and racers, and indulges in all sorts of extravagances. I quite thought it would have been all settled by this time, and that three brides would stand at the altar on Thursday," and Lady Molyneux looked at the bride elect.

"Perhaps she doesn't care to marry a Frenchman and live out of England," observed quiet Laura, who seldom or never got a chance of saying a word when Maud was present, as that illative young woman generally monopolized the whole of the conversation.

"Perhaps that is it. Though other countries are very lovely and bright and sunshiny, still there is no place like England. I should be very loth to leave it and make my home elsewhere," said Maggie, her eyes wandering once

more to the view of wood and hill and stream, over which the dusk of the early spring night was creeping.

"I don't think it is because of that," remarked Kate, looking very wise as she spoke of her friend.

"What is it, then?" demanded the second Miss Randal, promptly.

"I believe she has seen someone else that she likes, or thinks she likes better than the Comte."

"Why?"

"Because she used to speak as though she intended to marry him before her visit to town this last winter, and since then she has grown cool to him, and is smitten, I am certain, with the attractions of a fascinating and handsome artist she met while away."

"A handsome artist," cried Maud and Maggie, simultaneously.

"Who is he? What is his name?"

"I don't know. I don't remember her ever having told me," replied their eldest sister, calmly, little knowing the anxiety both felt, and the relief they experienced at not hearing the name they dreaded.

"It may only be a fancy," said her ladyship, after a pause, during which the cloud had deepened on her face and in her eyes. "She will return to her first love when it is past."

"Perhaps so. I hope she will. He would be a better match for her than an artist."

"Yes, they are always poor wretches," sneered Maud.

"Not always," objected Kate. "Sometimes they make big fortunes, and win fame as well, and are highly desirable acquaintances."

"Sometimes. Not often."

"I think you are prejudiced against them."

"Not in the least," she retorted, quickly, though a deep flush rose to her cheek and burnt there furiously, for she knew that her calm, sedate elder sister had long ago guessed how much she had once liked, and how equally much she now hated Terence O'Hara.

"Have you heard lately from Captain Clinton?" asked Maggie, quite unconscious of the cause of Maud's evident annoyance, still wishing to create a diversion.

"Yes, I heard two days ago."

"How is he getting on?"

"Very well indeed."

"Any chance of his coming back soon?"

"I am afraid not. He won't be able to get leave for another year or six months."

"And you don't intend to go out to him?"

"No. That part of the country is in too disturbed a state—and there is the drizzling-bell," she added.

"Is it?" cried her ladyship, jumping up quickly, and showing very little of the dignity her state and position demanded. "I must run off and make haste. I wonder what Brenshaw has found for me to wear. Laura, Kate, you must come to my room after dinner. I shall plead fatigue, and leave Maud to take my place and entertain my guests. I want to have a long, quiet chat with you, and to give you the things I brought from Paris. You must slip away quietly and come up to me. Won't you?"

"Yes."

They both agreed, and when the long stately dinner came to an end, and the ladies were in the drawing-room, Lady Molyneux noticed that Maggie was looking pale, and advised her to go to bed, as she must be tired after her long journey; and Maggie at once seized the opportunity, and left the room with Laura, making a sign to Kate to follow, and when the three were alone together, she showed them all the treasures she had brought with her, and gave them the pretty nightgowns she had purchased for them, and two beautiful Bengali lace veils, which three days later adorned their heads and hid their blushes, as they stood at the altar and pledged their troth respectively to Walter Langton and Richard Thornton in the little grey, ivy-grown church at Wingfield.



[WELCOME HOME.]

## CHAPTER XVII.

"DID HE FORGIVE?"

"How would you like a few weeks in town?" asked Sir Lionel a fortnight later, coming into the blue boudoir, where his wife sat with a delicate piece of work in her hand.

"I should like it very much," she replied at once.

"You won't mind leaving the country now, when it is looking its fairest and brightest?"

"Not to go with you. I would rather be in town with you than here without you."

"You darling," he ejaculated, kissing her with the old lover-like fervour that six months of matrimony had in no wise cooled.

"You have business there, I suppose?"

"Yes. I must go for two or three days, and as I have to take the trouble of going at all, I thought you might as well come too. I don't care to part with you for even forty-eight hours, you little witch; and of course you won't care to take a lot of smart gowns up to town for the space of three days, so we will start, if you would like it, a month or two."

"I should like it immensely," she reiterated.

"Very well. Then I will send Green up to look out for a furnished house. He will know what will suit us. You can be ready next week?"

"Yes."  
"Perhaps Eunice would like to go also. She will be company for you, as I shall have to leave you a good deal."

"Yes. I should like to have her with me."

"And Maud also?"

"Thanks. It is very good of you to make the suggestion, but she goes to Florence in a few days with aunt."

"Really! You don't mean to say that Mrs. Pattison is going to spend money on travelling?" laughed the Baronet, who knew how close the old lady was, and how little she cared to part with her money.

"She wouldn't if she could help it, you may be sure; but her lungs are affected, and the

doctors have ordered her to the south at once."

"Oh, I see. That accounts for the unwonted extravagance."

"Exactly so. I don't envy Maud."

"Nor I."

"Aunt will go in the cheapest and most uncomfortable manner possible."

"I suppose so. Here she comes," he added, as Miss Randal appeared on one of the lower terraces, making her way slowly towards the blue boudoir. "I must tease her about the tour."

"Well Maud," he began, the moment she came in, "I hear you are going to have a great treat."

"What is that?" she asked.

"A tour in foreign parts, under delightful circumstances."

"Oh, don't talk about it," she replied, making a little moue of disgust, "it is too awful to think of."

"Don't you think you will enjoy yourself very much?"

"No, I am sure I shan't. Aunt will take rooms in some dusky, dirty little street, and saunter out once or twice a day for a stroll on the Piazza della Signoria. That will be the beginning and end of my enjoyment."

"Ah, but only think you will be in a city full of memories of the past; where Michael Angelo lies, where Luca della Robbia worked, where Lorenzo the Magnificent lived, where Savonarola suffered."

"Yes, I know, but that won't do me any good."

"It will do you this much good, there will be heaps of places of interest to see. You must take a peep at the Palace of the Uffizi, the Duomo and the Campanile, and St. Marco, embellished with the frescos of Fra Angelico—then—"

"Don't, don't!" she interrupted, covering her ears with her hands, "I don't want to hear about all these things. I shall never be able to persuade my chaperon to go, and the disap-

pointment will be all the greater if I know what I am losing."

"Well, I won't tantalize you, then. I'll go out and so avoid the temptation, which I must acknowledge is very great. Good-bye for the present," and taking his hat he stepped out on to the terrace, where Rufus was waiting for him basking in the sun, and, accompanied by his great dog, he sauntered slowly away.

(To be continued.)

FEMALE VACCINATORS have been introduced in Madras so as to evade the prejudice against native women being treated by medical men.

A FRENCHMAN'S LOVE.—A Frenchman is a genuine gallant, assiduous in small attentions to woman; but he is a cold lover at heart. To him the woman is everything except his heart's love. She is his business partner, in fact, the managing partner of the business while he lives in his *cayé*. In the country she is his labouring man, his purse keeper, his adviser, often his master. To the professional man she is the mother of his children, the bringer in of a certain dot to the family store. In politics she is the centre around which men coöperate. In religion, the deputy and representative of all mankind at church. But in the heart of a Frenchman she has no place and no home. Marriages are made as business partnerships are made, with a due regard to business arrangements on all sides, and without any reference whatsoever to the impulses of the heart. Only a few days ago one of our handsomest young fellows gave up one of our prettiest girls, whose parents are rich, because the sum of hard cash to be handed over to him on the day of marriage was not equal to his demands. He will now, of course, look for another wife as he would look for another farm, with a sole regard to its income-bringing prospects.





["ACTING GOOD SAMARITAN?" SAID THE BARONET. "ARE YOU FOND OF CHILDREN, MISS HELEN?"]

NOVELLETTE.

## NELL'S MARRIAGE.

—O—

### CHAPTER I.

THE Pembertons were a hopelessly impecunious family, by which it is not meant to infer that they roved from neighbourhood to neighbourhood, cheating too confiding tradespeople, nor yet that they habitually quitted their residence by moonlight—without paying the rent. Oh, dear, no! They were poor, but their poverty was of an eminently respectable kind, and consisted, for the most part, in ceaseless efforts to make both ends meet when the said ends were always a couple of inches apart at the commencement of the struggle.

And respectable poverty, be it remarked, *en passant*, is far less exciting, far less eventful, than the other kind of impecuniosity. There is much more variety in eluding your landlord, and inventing plausible histories of your own coming grandeur wherein to entrap the unwary than in making sixpence do the work of a larger silver coin, and invariably passing all your leisure time in repairs.

Well, enough of introductions. The Pembertons were respectable, and the Pembertons were poor. They inherited the first quality from a long line of pious grandfathers. The second was to be ascribed to their father's open heart and generous temperament. Dr. Pemberton never refused to attend a patient because he felt doubtful of payment; he never could be brought to see that rich people's lives were more valuable than poor ones; and so, as the years rolled on, he estranged several of the wealthier members of the upper ten thousand at Smokington, and found his time more and more encroached upon by the lower classes.

His wife bore the struggle with poverty over sixteen years, then she gave up the attempt, leaving the doctor at fifty a widower,

with fifteen children. Priscilla, the eldest daughter, took up the household cares, and things went on much as usual at the red brick house. Providence doubtless considered the Pembertons too numerous, and so summoned a few of the fifteen olive branches to rejoin their mother. One or two were placed out in the world; and so, when we make the acquaintance of the family one blazing July afternoon, there were actually only four Miss Pembertons in the drawing-room, the other three, called collectively the children, having adjourned to a shady corner of the old-fashioned garden.

Priscilla, the eldest sister, was intent upon accounts. At twenty-three domestic cares had told on her; her pleasant face had many a line and furrow, but it was pleasant in spite of that; and I doubt if in all Smokington there was a woman whose sympathy was more sought or prized than that of the Doctor's eldest daughter.

"It's no use," and Miss Pemberton threw down her pen with a sigh. "I can't make these books balance, I've been over the figures till my head quite aches."

"Pitch them into the fire, Pris," suggested Nora, the youngest of the quartette, a bright, dark-eyed damsel of seventeen. "I'm sure I'd not sit stewing over them on this broiling day."

Priscilla sighed.

"My dear, you don't know how scarce money is. Papa told me only yesterday that—"

"Pris, are we going to the sea-side!" This interruption came from the second sister, a pretty delicate creature, the beauty, par excellence, of the family. Lily was the ornamental member of the household, and rarely did anything but recline on the sofa and read novels. Truth to say, she was slightly selfish, only no one would have been allowed to say so.

"No," said poor Priscilla, bluntly.

"But you said you'd ask papa."

"I couldn't," confessed Miss Pemberton,

"he looked so sad and worried, I hadn't the heart to, Lily."

The beauty looked injured.

"It's all very well for you," she returned gravely; "you three are just as strong! as horses. It doesn't matter to you whether you stay in this oven of a place or not, and of course you never think of what I suffer."

"Don't, Lil," came impulsively from the last of the quartette, the only one who had not spoken, "you know it comes harder on Priscilla and papa than on any of us."

"I don't know anything of the kind. I'm sure Priscilla is as strong as a horse."

Priscilla did not look so, certainly, but perhaps Lily supposed appearances to be deceptive.

Miss Pemberton put away her books with a patient sigh.

"I wish we were richer dear, for your sake; I do, indeed."

"There is only one way of getting richer," said Nora, who was gifted with a love of plain speaking. "We must marry as soon as possible."

The three sisters turned and looked at her in blank amazement; they had considered Nora up to that moment almost as much a child as her juniors in the garden. They would have as much expected her to attempt a journey to the moon as to utter such an awful sentiment.

"It's quite true," said Lily, after a long pause. "Nora need not have said it so bluntly, but it's just as she said—our one chance of getting away from this horrible Smokington is to marry."

"I don't want to get away," rejoined Priscilla.

"We needn't all go. If two or three married, well, just think what a blessing it would be for the rest. If we only married at all, without being fabulously rich, we should at least spare father our board and keep."

"Nora, Nora," said her eldest sister, reprovingly; "What on earth has put these ideas into your head?"

"I was reading a book on gardening yesterday, and it said lettuces must always be thinned out if they were to flourish. I argued that what was undoubtedly true respecting lettuces must also be so regarding the Misses Pemberton."

"There are no young men in Smokington," said Lily, drily; "at least, none we should care to marry."

"None who would care to marry us," remarked Nora. "Fancy, we have none of us ever had an offer. Father has had nine daughters, and yet no young man has ever desired to be his son-in-law."

"Father doesn't mind," returned Nell, "he does not want to lose us."

"He could spare some," said Nora, frankly. "Now, girls, I have a grand proposal to make. I want your best attention."

And she certainly had it. Lily was all eagerness; Priscilla and Nell, albeit they were a little shocked, yet listened with great interest.

"Let us make a solemn resolution," went on Nora gravely, "let us all promise that whichever of us first receives an offer of marriage shall accept it."

"Nonsense," from Priscilla.

"We may never have an offer," sagely, from Nell.

"The man might be a pauper or a chimney sweep," objected Lily from her sofa.

Nora shook her curls. "Of course the promise is conditional. It only means if the candidate is a gentleman and tolerably well off, three hundred a year perhaps we might draw the line at. Well ladies, is the proposition carried?"

"Don't be so ridiculous."

"But I have answered all your objections. Yours, of course, doesn't count Nell. If no one proposed we couldn't accept them. I've provided for Lily's scruples! Now let us pass the resolution, as they say at public meetings. I propose it, Lily seconds me. Now Priscilla, you and Nell must be the mass of the audience, and carry the motion with enthusiasm."

And though Priscilla was a little shocked, and Nell had a vague idea as to what it meant to pass on such a subject, Nora had her way, and the resolution was declared carried. "I feel as if something would happen," remarked Lily, meditatively. "How very strange it would be if knowing how favourably he was to be received the applicant stepped so lightly!"

"Only we don't know anyone," rejoined Nora, "but we must live in hope."

A prolonged knock at the front door, the sudden peeling of the bell, for a moment diverted all thoughts.

"It must be an accident," commented Miss Pemberton, "and papa is sent for all in a hurry. Dear me, I hope he's not ill."

"He went to London, didn't he, Priscilla?"

"Yes, dear; I expected him by five afternoon train. If he has missed that there's nothing when he may come."

Then came a rap at the door, and a neat maid-servant entered.

"Sir Adrian Carruthers," she announced, with elaborate distinctness, almost as though herself much impressed by the visitor's title.

The four Miss Pembertons felt as if the world were coming to an end—not that they were title worshippers, or narrow-minded enough to court a man because he had a title to his name; but the advent of a stranger at all would have been a surprise to them, and coming as he did on the top of that strange conversation they felt startled.

Sir Adrian set them at ease at once. "Going up to Priscilla, he offered her his hand with ready courtesy."

"I must apologise for this intrusion. I happened to be in the neighbourhood of Smokington, and I called, hoping to know my acquaintance with your father."

"Papa will be sorry to have missed you," explained Priscilla, "he has gone to London."

"And you do not know where he is staying?"

"He is not staying anywhere; he will be home to-night. If you would wait I am sure he would be glad to see you."

"Thanks," said Sir Adrian gravely. "I have never forgotten his kindness to me. I should like to shake hands with him again."

Now with her unfortunate tongue here interposed: "You speak as if you knew papa quite well, but of course you can't."

"Why not?" inquired the visitor, with perfect good humour.

"Because we have never heard of you in all our lives."

"Are you sure?"

"And yet I used to live here once," and he smiled. "It is a long time ago, more than twenty years. I was a delicate child, and your father and mother gave me a home while my parents were in India."

He did not say that the home had been liberally paid for—a true gentleman was Adrian in thought and deed.

"More than twenty years!" gasped Nora.

"How old you must be!"

"Four-and-thirty, at your service. I was left an orphan, then I went to Marlborough. I rather fancy," and he turned to Priscilla, "I left you a tiny daisy in white frocks and blue ribbons."

She smiled wistfully.

"I think I have heard of you," with an effort of memory. "When I was quite a little child, I remember papa having letters from someone in India. Could it have been you?"

"I think so. I wrote a pretty often at first. I was sent out to India a mere boy."

"And now you live in England?"

"I have been home seven years," with a slight compression of the lips, "and I have often thought of your father; and to-day when I passed this station and heard the porters scream out 'Smokington,' some impulse made me alight, and determine to find my way here, and see if there would be a welcome for me at the old red-brick house."

His eyes wandered round the room.

"It is hardly changed at all," he said, as here and there he noted old familiar objects.

"I look as if I had been asleep for years and just woke up," said Sir Adrian, "and I have often thought of your father; and to-day when I passed this station and heard the porters scream out 'Smokington,' some impulse made me alight, and determine to find my way here, and see if there would be a welcome for me at the old red-brick house."

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heard him for ages; he seemed to have forgotten those ever-increasing debts in the sunshine of his old old ward's visit. Sir Adrian's attention, his warm, kind recollections of the years he had spent in the red-brick house seemed to touch the physician keenly. There was no difficulty in seeing his pleasure, and when he pleaded with the baronet to remain for the night, Priscilla seconded the invitation warmly.

"I should like it awfully," said Adrian, "only—"

"You are expected at home, perhaps," said Dr. Pemberton, "which reminds me, my dear boy I have been longing to ask after Lady Carruthers."

"I am not expected at home. This only I shall be getting up to such trouble."

"Nonsense, we like to have you; don't we, Eric?"

Priscilla turned Sir Adrian it was a pleasure to her father to talk over old times.

"Then I will stay," said the Baronet, heartily. "Dr. Pemberton, I am enjoying myself more than I have done for years."

"And you have left India for good?"

"I had to give it up when I came in for the title at my uncle's death. I was very, much disappointed at the time."

"Disappointed at being a rich man," Sir Adrian frowned.

"The riches brought me little pleasures. I don't think I am an ambitious man. In want of way I am glad to be Carruthers of Carruthers, but I don't know that it brings me any satisfaction."

"And you live at Carruthers?"

"I don't 'live' anywhere. I have been a wanderer on the face of the earth ever since—here he stopped abruptly, and then added in a changed voice—"my wife died!"

It was the question they had all asked themselves. Was this handsome, wealthy baronet married or single? They knew now he was a widower, and Dr. Pemberton, remembering his own loss, felt a thrill of pity for one similarly bereaved.

"It is a terrible affliction," he said gravely; "forgive me for my light allusion to Lady Carruthers just now. Believe me, I had no idea—"

"I am sure of it," said Adrian, with a winning smile. "You must not think of that again, Dr. Pemberton, and my loss is not a recent one now. My wife has been dead six years."

It came to him, with a sort of pang, that he must have loved the dead woman very tenderly in all those six years, to have been faithful to her memory; but it was not Nell's way to express her feelings. She never said this even to her sisters, when later on they were discussing Sir Adrian's story.

"I like him very much," said Lily, with remarkable enthusiasm; "he is quite like a hero of romance."

"Perhaps, you would like to be the heroine of a romance where she was hero," observed Nora with her usual shrewdness.

"Of course, if he asks me. I shall try to be faithful to our resolution," returned Lily demurely. "Priscilla, how long will Sir Adrian stay?"

"Father invited him for a week."

"Don't look so horrified, don't you like him! She's thinking of the hills," chimed in Nora. Priscilla did not deny the accusation, and very soon sleep took the Miss Pembertons under her kindly care, and no doubt they dreamed of the handsome stranger.

Little, little did they guess the real motive of Sir Adrian's visit to Smokington. It was quite true he had wished to see his old friend, and revisit the house which had been home to him for so many years, but he had had another object. The wife who had left him so long ago had left behind her a little child. That child, a boy of seven, was growing too old to be so long consigned to servants' care, and the father had dreamed vaguely of sending the boy where he himself had been so happy.

The moment he questioned the servant he knew that Mrs. Pemberton was dead, and his



around a vain one, but he stayed on because the simple, hearty welcome was so unlike what he was used to that he felt another creature.

There was a dark secret in his life—a secret which had changed him from a frank, genial, trusting man to a suspicious, reserved, staid. Here, amid the old scenes of his childhood, he relaxed a little his usual manner. In the world Sir Adrian Carruthers passed for the coldest and most distant of men. He was reported to have steeled his heart against all women, to trust but few of his own sex, to care for nothing but his books and travels, to have but scant love or care for the little child who bore his name.

"I wish Mrs. Pemberton were alive," thought Sir Adrian, as he sat and smoked a last cigar before retiring. "I couldn't send the child there now; that eldest girl looks as if she had too many cares already. Why she can't be twenty-three, and she looks thirty. What a pity children will grow. Why couldn't Tom keep ababy a few years longer?"

The next day Sir Adrian spent in visiting many of his old haunts; he insisted on driving the doctor to all his patients in his dog-cart, and made himself altogether so agreeable and delightful that he won golden opinions from Priscilla and her sisters.

As yet he had made no mention of his child. The Pembertons, with rare delicacy, never alluded to his private affairs, and Tom was not sufficiently dear to his parent for Sir Adrian to disclose readily about him. It was the afternoon of the third day, that, strolling down the village street, he came upon Nell confining a small boy, who had evidently been in the wars, judging from the muddy appearance of his jacket, and the tears still streaming down his cheeks.

Sir Adrian watched the little scene attentively, it had given him an idea. He crossed the road just as Nell dismissed the child, consoled and radiant with a panny to buy sweets. "Aching good Samaritan," said the Baronet pleasantly. "Are you fond of children, Miss Helen?"

"Yes," said Nell, simply. "I never can bear to see a child cry. I think little children ought to be happy. There are so many troubles we must have when we grow up that a happy childhood is like a bright spot to look back upon."

"I am quite sure your childhood was happy."

"Oh, yes."

"And you can't have much trouble now."

Nell smiled wistfully.

"There are different kinds of troubles."

"Young ladies' troubles generally mean love affairs," suggested Sir Adrian gravely.

Nell's pale face grew crimson.

"I think that is a very sweeping conclusion."

"But a true one."

"Not always, I should think," quite forgetting she was talking to a stranger, and merely expressing a pet theory of her own. "It was quite possible for a woman to have plenty of trouble and plenty of happiness, too, without meddling with what people call love."

He looked at her closely.

"You don't believe in love?"

"Yes, for some people."

"Not for all?"

"No, I don't see why everyone must be a victim to it."

"I think you are quite right. I don't believe in love at all."

Nell stared; she thought of his dead wife. Then she decided he must doubt love's power, since he had not sufficed to save Lady Carruthers from an early death.

"I can understand that," she said, slowly.

Sir Adrian wondered how. He did not believe like the idea that his story—he had a very subtle, have penetrated as far as Smockington.

"I am quite convinced," said the Baronet, speaking with more vehemence than seemed at all necessary, "that there is no such thing as love. What passes by that name is merely a glamour of the senses, soon removed or smothered."

Nell decided the late Lady Carruthers' loss had a little affected her husband's brain.

"Are you very fond of Smockington?" asked Sir Adrian, abruptly. "Do you think you could be happy away from it?"

"I am very fond of Smockington," returned Nell, simply. "You see I have lived here all my life."

"And that is?"

"More than twenty years."

"And you could not be happy away from it?"

Nell's blue eyes seemed dreamily fixed on space. Truth to say, she had a dream of her own respecting Smockington. If the doctor's circumstances did not shortly improve his third daughter considered it would be her duty shortly to leave the dear old red brick house, if only Lily could be persuaded to teach the "children," in which case Nell believed she herself might aid the family fortunes by going out as a resident governess. It flashed upon her suddenly that here was the very chance she wanted. Sir Adrian was rich and fashionable. Of course he knew a heap of grand families; perhaps he could recommend her to some aristocratic mother as instructress to her children. She determined to confide in him.

"I believe I could be happy anywhere."

Sir Adrian smiled.

"Anywhere?"

"Yes, if I knew it was well with them at home," here the blue eyes grew dim with tears; "and they were better for my being away, I think I could make myself happy anywhere. I often think about going. You see there are so many of us one could easily be spared, and my salary would be such a help."

The baronet felt a strange admiration for the girl; he knew now just what she meant.

"I don't think your father would like you to be a governess."

"I mean to coax him into it. Sir Adrian, if I can get him to consent, would you try and recommend me to some of your friends?"

The baronet smiled.

"I will think about it; only you are so happy here, do you think you could bear it, really?"

"Oh, yes!"

"It would be different, you know, to leaving home for what the world calls love; it would be lonely. You would miss the old home faces."

Nell turned to him with a grave smile.

"I could bear that if I had made up my mind. When I have persuaded papa will you try and remember my wishes, Sir Adrian?"

He told her simply "yes," and then they found themselves at the door of the red brick house.

Nell had a bedroom to herself.

In such a large family this may seem strange, but Priscilla shared the apartment of the children that she might be sure of their well-being; and at eight, nine, and eleven years old she deemed herself as necessary to them as she had been when her mother died, leaving them three babies under three.

Nora slept with Lily, who was of a nervous turn of mind, and so Nell had a domain all to herself—a large, unpretentious looking attic—where she had collected all the furniture exiled from the other rooms as hopelessly decrepit or unpardonably shabby. The apartment was bedroom and study in one, Nell's special refuge from troubles, and dissensions; and, ungainly though it was, was dear to the girl's heart.

Here she came the morning after that long conversation with Sir Adrian. Things had gone a little uncomfortably downstairs; the baronet was to leave on the morrow, and Lily had taken upon herself to lecture Nora upon her enormities in never leaving her *séjour* with Sir Adrian, adding he had had no opportunity to propose to her. Nora retorted he was not anxious to do so. There had been quite a verbal fight, and Nell, growing strangely weary of it, had come upstairs for a few minutes' repose in her own peculiar den.

She bolted the door, a needful precaution,

since the children were accustomed to rush in on her at all hours; then she was walking leisurely to a large rocking chair near the open window, when a letter lying on the table attracted her attention.

How had it got there? Certainly it had been placed there since she went down to breakfast, and as certainly not by the neat fingers of their little housemaid; for such a remarkable event as Miss Nell's having a letter "all to herself" would certainly have impressed that retainer sufficiently to make her deliver it into the young lady's own hand.

Nell took up the letter and stared hard at the superscription. It had not come through the post since it bore no stamp. It was directed in a clear, bold hand—"Miss Nell Pemberton."

There was no address, and the envelope was sealed with a crest. Nell curiously grew strong. She had not the remotest idea what she expected to see, when at length she tore open the envelope, and unfolded the sheet of paper it enclosed, and yet what she did see surprised her almost beyond measure.

"My DEAR MISS NELL,—"

"I have been thinking a great deal of what you said yesterday, and at last have ventured to write to you, feeling sure that if you are unwilling to grant my request you will respect my confidence, and pardon what you may deem presumption. You told me yesterday you did not believe in love, and also that you could be happy anywhere—even away from Smockington."

"I do not believe in love either, but I believe in you. I think you are true and generous, honest and faithful. I want you to prove your own words, and to be happy even away from Smockington."

"I know of no friend needing you, but I need you sorely myself. Will you consent to be my wife, the mother of my little lonely child?"

"I do not offer you love. Since we neither of us believe in it you will not resent the omission. It is not in me to be a lover. I am too old and world-worn to woo you as you might be wooed, but I assure you if you will trust yourself to me you shall have every respect and esteem due to Lady Carruthers. It is a heavy burden I am seeking to lay on your slender shoulders; only I have seen you with a child in your arms. I have heard you say you like to make little ones happy, this is my only encouragement. Our acquaintance is so brief I cannot ask you to think kindly of myself; only remember whatever of good there is in me I owe to your father and mother. You can judge, therefore if I would do my best to make their daughter happy."

"I should like to know your decision soon. To-night I am going with your father to a distant village, to-morrow I am to leave Smockington. Will you let me have your answer before I go? Do not write to me if things are to be as I wish. Come to me in your father's study; the room is usually vacant at eleven."

"However you may decide this matter believe me, your sincere friend."

"ADRIAN CARRUTHERS."

Poor Nell!

It was very well for her to say lightly she did not believe in love. She had longed for love all her life. She did not know it; she could not understand the vague yearning of her own heart, the "something wanting" she had felt ever since she left her childhood's days behind. Even now she did not know that she was one of those souls which yearn for love as naturally as the flowers for the sun—*even now*, as she read Sir Adrian's letter, and cried over it till her pretty eyes were all swollen and red, she did not guess that what pained her so was the utter want of tenderness in the offer, the calm, practical tone of the correspondence.

"What was to be done?"

Nell resolved on one thing at once—before she left her own room the decision must be arrived at. She could not hope for another quiet time all that day, she must make up her own mind now.

She did not love Sir Adrian, but then she

loved no one else. She had been ready to leave home and go out as a governess for the benefit of her family. For their sakes ought she not to accept a proposal which would make her a rich man's wife? As Lady Carruthers what might she not do for the others? Then there was that pitiful mention of the child, a lonely, motherless child. Nell felt quite sure she did not love Sir Adrian, and yet she made certain she should love his child.

"I dare say I should hardly see him," thinking of the man who was, perhaps, to be her husband. "I expect we should be very fashionable people, and both go different ways. Well, there would be no deceit about it; he distinctly says he doesn't want me to love him, he only wants a mother for his child. I wonder how old it is, and if it is a boy or a girl? Poor little thing! Perhaps he can't care for it because it cost its mother's life, poor lonely little one. Did he love her very much? What could she have been like to make him mourn her so. I think I should have liked someone to love me like that. Heigho! nobody will. I must be plain Nell Pemberton to the end of my days, or else Helen Carruthers, with a certainty that my husband doesn't love me."

"Oh, dear!" as a tap at the door announced her quiet time over, "who can that be? Go away, children, I am busy."

"It is I, dear," in Priscilla's gentle voice. "Nell, I want to come and talk to you."

Nell plunged her face into cold water and the letter into her pocket, both performances being so rapidly executed as to take barely a minute between them, then she quietly unfasted the door.

"My dear Nell," said Priscilla, in alarm, as she closed it, "what is the matter? you look dreadfully ill?"

"I have a shocking headache."

"I am so sorry I disturbed you, but I had no idea you had come upstairs because you felt ill."

"It doesn't matter," said Nell throwing her warm, young arms round her sister and kissing her. "I like to have you all to myself a little, dear. What is it?"

It proved to be a domestic consultation on some piece of extravagance committed by Lily and only just come to light; the beauty was fond of incurring little private bills and coming on the general purse for their discharge.

"I think we have spoilt Lil amongst us," said Nell, simply. "She is very pretty, but she knows it too well, and takes advantage."

Priscilla sighed.

"She really is very delicate."

"Don't you think she would be better if she exerted herself a little. Seriously, Pris, don't you think she might manage to teach the children?"

"They would never take to her after you."

"But if they had to lose me, if I went away to—to teach someone else," with a dim wonder whether Adrian's little child was old enough to be taught at all.

Priscilla looked dismayed.

"You are too unselfish, Nell; you are just the one who ought to stay at home and be made much of since your godmother left you the rich woman of the family."

"Fifty pounds a year isn't much."

"If it were Lil's she'd insist on spending every penny on herself."

"But it's mine. Pris, tell me just one thing. Don't think of my feelings, do look at it from a bread-and-butter point of view. Wouldn't things be easier if I were away from home?"

Priscilla was fairly caught, she could answer nothing.

"You know they would, Pris. Why don't you confess the truth?"

Poor Pris was crying.

"Of course one would make a difference, but, Nell, I'd rather it were anyone but you. I can't spare you."

"I expect it'll have to be me," said Nell, gravely, feeling certain Sir Adrian's proposal was, like a season-ticket for the Crystal Palace, non-transferable, and wondering dimly if she

were glad or sorry for the resemblance "Well, Pris, we have settled that other business. Should you mind, dear, if I gave the children a holiday. I feel knocked up!"

She spent nearly all that day alone in her own room. She had pretty well made up her mind; but with Sir Adrian's letter in her pocket she could not go downstairs and hear Lil's calm predictions of her own success in gaining the baronet's favour. Nell went to bed early, but it was very little sleep came to her dark eyes, and with the earliest sunshine she was up and dressed.

Breakfast was a scrambling meal at the red brick house, rarely more than three members of the family sat down to it together, so that it was not in the least necessary for Nell to meet Sir Adrian before the hour appointed for that strange interview in the surgery.

She heard her father go out at half-past ten; she saw the baronet walk down the street with him, but instinct told her he would return; and she had hardly taken up her position in the study when his knock sounded. Then there was a little delay, as though Priscilla met and questioned him she never caught his answer.

"I won't be long. I want something in your father's study;" then she felt rather than heard the study door open and Sir Adrian Carruthers enter.

He closed the door noiselessly, and came straight to her side. Poor Nell tried to look calm and dignified, as though the matter were really the business affair he seemed to consider it, but she failed ignobly, and his first greeting to her was,—

"How awfully ill you look!"

"Yes," said Nell, much more humbly than was her wont, "I had a horrible headache all day yesterday."

"I hope it is better?"

"Oh! yes."

An awkward pause.

"I think by your being here you must have had my letter. Nell, I want my answer."

Nell felt awfully embarrassed; she would have given something for power to imitate his calmness.

"Are you quite sure you wish it?"

"I am quite sure I want you to be my wife."

"You know I am not in the least suitable."

"I think you are very suitable; you will be a loving mother to my little boy, and you are sensible enough not to believe in the folly people call love. I can offer you the warmest respect, the highest esteem. We shall get on very well together, Nell; I will take care of you, and do my best to shield you from all sorrow."

A long pause; he wondered at her hesitation.

"Well, may I tell your father you have consented? Nell, you have not known me very long; but, indeed, you may trust me. I will be as careful of your happiness as—as anyone who professed to love you need be."

Nell cleared her throat.

"And we need not pretend to care for each other, need we?" she asked, coolly. "I hate shams."

"So do I. We will pretend nothing; we will appear the good friends and companions I hope we shall be. Of course we need not enlighten the whole world as to the sensible arrangements we have come to."

"Of course not," thinking she could not bear Lily's sneer, Nora's cutting laugh, or even Priscilla's gentle sadness. "It is quite our own affair."

"Entirely. Then you consent?"

"Yes."

He took her hand and looked straight into her blue eyes.

"When will you come to me, Nell?"

"When you like," said Nell, philosophically. If the deed must be done, the date of doing it seemed to her to matter little.

"Next month?"

She started; that was very near, nearer than she had dreamed.

"I don't want to startle you," said Sir

Adrian, kindly, "but I want my wife, and the Court needs its mistress."

It was July then, but the loveliest of months was waning. A strange thought came to Nell that her girlhood might as well end with the summer flowers, and so she let Sir Adrian fix their wedding day for the first week in September.

"We shall be very happy," said he, quietly. "I hope you will like the Court, Nell."

"Won't you tell me something about him?" asked the girl, wistfully.

"Who?"

"Your child."

"Tom!" The baronet's face clouded. "I don't know much about him. I can't bear children."

"But he is your only one, and he has no mother."

"He will have a mother soon. He is nearly seven years old, and a terrible pickle, they tell me."

"Don't you know? Do you just trust to what people tell you?"

"I don't suppose I have been at home a month at a time since he was born," said Adrian, slowly. "Nell, I don't think I have been what people call a good father. Men are different to women, they can't forget."

He fancied from that stray remark of hers in their walk she knew his story, and would guess he could not forget how the boy's mother had wronged him. She thought he meant he could not forget how his wife's life had been given for the child's. Then before they had time time for more they were interrupted. Dr. Pemberton had forgotten some important note, and hurrying back to write it, discovered Sir Adrian standing in very close proximity to his daughter, little Nell's cheeks hot and tear-stained.

The baronet took the initiative at once.

"You have known me a good many years, doctor. Will you give me Nell?"

"Give her to you!" gasped Dr. Pemberton, who was the worst hand at match-making in the world. "What for?"

"My wife," said the young man simply. "Indeed, I will take care of her and shield her from all sorrow if only you will trust her to my keeping."

"Nell," said the astonished Doctor, turning to his daughter in bewilderment, "are you both serious, really?"

"Yes," returned Nell, with a strange odd kind of lump in her throat; "quite serious, papa."

Dr. Pemberton gave his consent with moistened eyes, and so the die was cast. Little Nell was the affianced wife of Sir Adrian Carruthers, a man who had told her point-blank that he did not believe in love, and could offer her only respect and esteem.

## CHAPTER II.

Never was there greater astonishment than that which prevailed in the old red brick house when the news spread through the family that Nell was to be Lady Carruthers of Carruthers Court.

After that one frightened reply to her father's question, after admitting she was really "serious," Nell left the doctor and Sir Adrian alone together, while she sped away to her own room. When she had reached its friendly shelter she threw herself on the bed, and sobbed as though her heart would break.

She was to be Sir Adrian's wife. However many years Heaven spared her she must live them out at his side, and he did not love her. She could never be more to him than the mistress of his house, the guardian of his child.

She was aroused at last. Priscilla came in search of her; the elder sister put one arm round Nell's slender form and kissed her very fondly.

"This is great news, dear."

"Are you glad?" asked Nell, gravely. "Oh! Pris, do say you are pleased?"

"Of course I am glad," returned Priscilla.



heartily. "I shall miss you cruelly, Nell, but I like to think you will be happy. You have been sacrificing yourself for others all your life, and now there will be some one to care for you and cherish you."

If she had only known the truth, this agreement was the culminating sacrifice of all.

"Do the others know?" asked Nell, faintly.

"Yes, I thought it best to tell them, as soon as Sir Adrian and papa were gone. I went up to the drawing room with the news."

At least that was a relief, he was gone—the lover who was no lover.

Priscilla knew a great deal more about the details of the match than her sister did herself. Bending over Nell she told her how good and generous Sir Adrian was, how he had told her from the day of his wedding he meant to settle five hundred a-year upon Dr. Pemberton, how Nell herself was to be amply provided for.

"He asked to see me alone," went on Priscilla; "he said you had promised to come to him in September, and he asked me to choose everything you would want. He is a very generous man, this lover of yours, little Nell," and she showed the girl a crisp bank-note for a hundred pounds.

The tears stood in Nell's blue eyes, it seemed to her like her purchase-money, the price Sir Adrian had paid for her.

"I can't take it, dear," she sobbed; "if Sir Adrian wants to marry me, he must take me as I am!"

But Priscilla talked and persuaded till in the end she gained her own way, and perhaps the elder sister had never had any occupation which charmed her more than this of choosing wedding clothes for the future Lady Carruthers.

Dr. Pemberton called Nell into his study that night and shut the door.

"My dear," he said, kindly, "you are quite sure this is your own doing?"

"Quite, papa."

"Remember, child, you must not marry Sir Adrian unless it is your own free wish."

"I wish it, papa."

He sighed.

"He is a handsome man and a generous one, but I would rather you had been his first love, child. It may seem a cruel thing to say to you, but I fear a good portion of his heart lies buried in his wife's grave."

Nell's eyes never quailed beneath her father's scrutiny; she was silent for a moment, and when she spoke her answer surprised herself.

"Then he wants someone all the more to make his home bright and cheerful."

Lily and Nora received the tidings with wild amazement. Before they encountered Nell, however, this had toned down. Nora loved her too dearly to vex her, and the beauty remembered it would be a good thing for her to visit at Carruthers Court, therefore their greeting was all that could be expected.

"Fancy, Nell!" cried Nora, "it is not a week ago yet since I proposed and carried that memorable resolution. We little suspected then what was going to happen."

"Of course the bridesmaids will wear pink," said Lily; "it is the only colour that really suits me, and I shall be chief."

"I never thought of bridesmaids."

"Never thought of bridesmaids! You must be mad!"

"You see it is not like a real wedding."

"What do you mean?"

"Sir Adrian has been married before. He might not like us to make it a grand affair, lest it should remind him of that other wedding."

"Nonsense!"

Nell yielded the point, resolved she would refer it to her lover's decision when next they met.

The opportunity came sooner than she had expected. About a fortnight afterwards, just as Lily's curiosity at his silence could not be suppressed, one August day, when the beauty

had gone to make calls, and Nora had conducted the children for a walk, Sir Adrian made his appearance unexpectedly, as Nell sat alone in the drawing-room busy over some fine needle-work.

There was no one to witness their meeting. Priscilla was busy upstairs, and did not hurry herself to come down, thinking the lovers would enjoy a *tête-à-tête*.

The lovers! Sir Adrian went up to Nell and took her hand, then, drawing her towards him, he kissed her lightly on the forehead, but the girl shrank away.

"You must never do that again."

"Why not?" a little nettled.

"You know we agreed we would have no sham. Let us be true and open with each other always, Sir Adrian."

Very quietly, but with a shade of authority in his manner, he drew her towards the old-fashioned sofa, made her sit down there, and placed himself at her side. He made no comment on her last speech; indeed, his first words were a question.

"Are you glad to see me, Nell?"

"Yes," admitted Nell, frankly. "I wanted to talk to you. I was just thinking of writing to you."

"I should have been here sooner, but I have had business to transact. Nell, give me your hand."

He had taken a little case from his pocket. He opened it and took out a splendid hoop of diamonds, which he placed on the girl's slender finger.

"It will remind you of your promise," he said, gravely. "In less than three weeks, now, I hope to replace it by a plain gold one."

"It is very beautiful," answered Nell; "but I am afraid I shall lose it; it is so large."

He looked critically at the little snowflake of a hand.

"What mites of hands you have!" he said, at last. "Just like a child's. Do you know, Nell, you don't look much more than a child?"

"How is your child?"

"Tom! I haven't seen him. I went down to the Court last week, to order everything to be prepared for us. I thought we would go down there directly after the honeymoon."

"Must we have a honeymoon?"

He looked surprised.

"I think so; it is customary."

"I would much rather not."

"Why?"

"Don't you think it would be better if there was nothing to remind you of your first wedding?"

"I am not afraid of such memories. Nell, I want to do all possible honour and reverence to my wife. We will have a honeymoon like other people, dear, and then we will come back to the Court, and I think you will make it more of a home to me than it has ever been since I became its master."

Nell played idly with the diamonds on her finger.

"I hope you won't be dull," he continued, half apologetically. "There are plenty of neighbours near, but, of course it will be a change, after being one of a large, merry family like this. If you feel lonely you must ask one of your sisters on a long visit."

"I think I had rather not, Sir Adrian. I must learn to do without them, and I would rather learn at first."

"How much longer are you going to call me Sir Adrian?"

"I don't know."

"You must learn to drop the 'Sir,' Nell. It sounds so formal, and I don't like it."

"I will try to remember."

"What did you want to ask me, Nell?"

"It was only—"

"Speak out. Surely you are not afraid of me, child?"

"No, it was only that the girls have set their hearts on our having a grand wedding, and I thought you would not like it."

"I shall like it if it pleases you. Nell, don't you know I want you to be happy? I will give

you everything in the world, child, except the mock sentiment we don't believe in."

Poor Nell felt, at that moment, she would have given anything in the world just for a little of that mock sentiment, but it was too late to say so now.

Enter Priscilla full of welcome and congratulations. Adrian crossed over to her, and Nell made good her escape.

"What have you been doing to Nell?" was the Baronet's inquiry; "she looks worn to death."

"I think she is nervous and excited. You see, this is a very eventful time for her."

Sir Adrian shaded his face with one hand.

"I wonder if I am doing her an injustice," he cried, suddenly; "to link her bright youth to my sober, saddened, middle age. Miss Pemberton, do you think I am wronging the child?"

"I think Nell will be very happy with you," answered Priscilla, gently; "and I am very glad she should have such a pleasant, careful life. She is not at all strong, and of late years a great deal of anxiety has fallen on her."

"Anxiety! not!"

Priscilla laughed.

"Not love troubles; Nell always professed never to believe in love. No, I meant other things. I have had to depend a great deal on her lately, and I think we have overtaken her strength. She never spares herself for those she loves."

It came on Adrian with a pang, that in spite of her sister's denial he was wronging the girl. What right had he to take her from this loving home, when he never meant to give her anything warmer than esteem and duty?

He stayed three days, and no one suspected how things lay between him and Nell. To all appearance he was a very devoted suitor; he drove her out in his dog-cart, walked with her in the sweet August evenings, and altogether behaved himself, to outward eyes, as he might have done had he believed in that "hollow sentiment" men call love.

The third of September dawned at last. It was a beautiful, summer's day, the cloudless sky a perfect azure, the sun pouring his warm rays full into the little country church, and falling full on Nell's soft, brown hair, turning it to threads of gold, as she spoke the solemn words which bound her for all time to Adrian Carruthers.

People said afterwards she was the picture of a bride in her white silk draperies. Four of her sisters attended her, and Lil's taste had certainly prevailed, for the colour of their dresses was the faintest rose-pink.

Everyone thought the bride and bridegroom remarkably self-possessed. They never lost their composure, were always ready with their responses, and never attempted to speak them too soon; but Sir Adrian felt his wife's hand tremble as he placed it on his arm, and led her into the vestry to sign her name for the last time as Helen Pemberton.

The clergyman, who had known her from infancy, congratulated her, the doctor gave her his blessing, her sisters hung on her and kissed her. Adrian had a kind of far-off, out-in-the-cold sensation, until at last she turned to him, and he walked with her slowly down the aisle to the carriage.

Two hours afterwards they had left Smokington. Nell in a pretty, grey, travelling costume, reclined in one corner of the railway carriage; Sir Adrian, in the other, was immersed in the *Times*. Certainly, if Sir Adrian's valet, and my lady's own maid, who were in another part of the train, could have seen their master and mistress, they would have thought their behaviour a little strange.

"Tired, Nell?" Sir Adrian asked, presently, when the paper having ceased to interest him, he tossed it aside.

"Yes," she answered, simply, "it has been such a long day."

It was not a flattering speech, but he did not resent it; instead, he crossed over to her side, and began a conversation.

"I thought we would push on to Dover to-

night, sleep there, and cross for Calais in the morning. I am sure you are too tired to cross to-night."

"I think I would rather cross to-night."

"Why?"

"I don't know. Where shall we go when we get to Calais?"

"To Cologne via Brussels, and then up the Rhine. We shall see some lovely scenery, Nell. I hope you will enjoy yourself."

"Thank you!"

He felt annoyed. Why would she not accept the terms he offered—warm, cordial friendship, such as men feel for men? Why would she persist in being cold and ceremonious, because they had agreed love was absurd?

"I wish you'd understand I want you to enjoy yourself, Helen," he said, rather irritably. "I did not marry you to shut you up at Carruthers, and never let you go anywhere."

"I thought you married me because you wanted someone to take care of your little boy," she answered. "That was our agreement. I am quite ready to perform my part of it."

She had an intense sense of justice. It seemed to her, on this foreign tour, Sir Adrian was inflicting a needless punishment on himself, and she had little hope of pleasure in it.

[To be concluded in our next.]

## THE FAIR ELAINE.

### CHAPTER VIII.

But when Lady Elaine went upstairs Arley ran into her room with a radiant face.

"You darling!" she cried, winding her arms about her waist, and giving her a delightful little hug. "So you've struck your colours at last! Here I have been manoeuvring for this very thing for a long time, and mentally scolding you for your obstinacy all the while."

"My obstinacy? Why, Arley, dear, what can you mean?" Lady Elaine cried, blushing with confusion, though a happy smile wreathed her red lips.

"Yes, your obstinacy. You persisted in keeping aloof from Wil unless he almost forced himself upon you; and then you would receive the attentions of Mr. Paxton, though it made Wil perfectly wretched, and, besides all that, when it was expressly understood from the first that he was to be my special cavalier. Where were your eyes, that you could not see that your handsome lover was nearly distracted with envy and jealousy?"

"Arley, Arley, do stop that usually tongue of yours, or I shall begin to think that someone else is nearly distracted with envy and jealousy," Lady Elaine retorted, laughing.

Arley Wentworth blushed a fiery crimson.

"I don't care what any one thinks now that it is all settled between you and Wil," she said, defiantly. "I knew from the first," she ran on, "that he was over head and ears in love with you, and that his life would be ruined if he lost you, and besides—"

"Besides what, dear?" her companion asked, as she hesitated and looked up at her, archly.

"I knew that you loved him; and I thought it too bad that a lovely romance should be spoiled just for the want of a little manoeuvring; yes, I will confess it now," she continued, in reply to Lady Elaine's look of surprise. "I have intervened in every way to help you and Wil along—I pointed out upon your would-be knight whenever I saw him approaching you with malicious afterthought, and bore him a ray a captive, bound with invisible chains; I assure you, you have no idea what an accomplished strategist I have grown to be during the last three or four weeks. You were right the other day—I did set a little trap for you, and you fell into it charmingly. If I had found that you did not love Wil, I should, of course, have advised matters to go on as they would, and Philip Paxton might have won you and welcome if he could. But it is a load off my

mind to have the thing settled, and just as it should be, too. I know you will be delightfully happy, for Wil is a jewel, and you're another; so take my blessing, and joy go with it for ever."

The gay girl had rattled this off with a nervous excitement which was very unnatural, and as soon as she had finished she gave her fair companion a hasty kiss, and then bounded out of the room without giving her any opportunity to reply.

But if Lady Elaine could have seen her five minutes later, stretched upon her bed, in an abandonment of passionate weeping, she would have wondered more than ever at her mood.

But the storm was not of long duration. Arley Wentworth was very, very proud, and she was not long in resenting the weakness that had made her weep.

She started suddenly up, her face one sheet of flame.

"I will not be a fool," she cried, clenching her small hands, and lifting her head defiantly. "If I could sleep my thoughts in oblivion I would do it. At all events I will not wear my heart upon my sleeve for laws to peck at—that is a very new sentiment," she added, with a bitter smile, "but it appears to be a very apt quotation for my case."

She went to her basin and dashed the cold water over her flushed face, bathing it until she had removed all traces of her recent tears; then, dressing herself with unusual care, she went gaily down to dinner, and was so charming and brilliant that she was the very life of the party throughout the evening.

But she now as studiously avoided Philip Paxton as she had before sought him.

As we know, he had resolved to console himself for his disappointment by turning to her, but when he approached her that evening, and made some playful remark, she only tossed her head with a gay retort and turned to some one else, as if he were the last one of whom she ever thought, except when he rebuked himself upon her notice.

This entirely new departure puzzled and piqued him, and having from the first been really more interested in her than Lady Elaine, this avoidance served to make him exert himself to the utmost, to see if he could not conquer her obstinacy and caprice.

He had flattered himself that he should have no difficulty in winning both herself and her fortune, but he began to think now that the conquest might not be so easy after all.

"Miss Wentworth, will you ride with me to-morrow morning? I have arranged with Sir Anthony for the use of his two best saddle-horses."

He made this request just before the cotte party separated for the night, having actually been obliged to run Arley into a corner in order to do so.

"I could not possibly, Mr. Paxton," the girl answered, with quick decision, but her eyes were so bright that they thrilled him, and he wondered at the brilliant colour in her cheeks.

"May I ask why not?" he inquired, with his blindest smile.

"I've promised Annie to play the part of a Dorcas with her to-morrow—visit the poor, bind up their broken hearts, and heads, if there be any such, feed the hungry, &c.," she answered, trying to edge away from him.

"But, Arley, I will release you from your promise if you prefer to ride," said gentle Annie Hamilton, generously, she having overheard Mr. Paxton's request.

"Thanks, Annie, dear, but I could not accept a release, much as I usually enjoy a canter. I never break a promise if I can avoid it, so Mr. Paxton will be obliged to excuse me."

"But," she added, the next instant, a wicked twinkle in her dark eyes, "here is Miss Simpson, and she is always ready to ride, you know. Suppose you transfer your proposal to her, since I cannot go."

"Where?" queried Miss Simpson, who, having approached just at this moment, overheard this latter remark.

"Mr. Paxton will tell you. You will have

to excuse me, for I must speak to Lady Hamilton before she retires. Good-night!"

And having accomplished this little piece of mischief, Arley made the prettiest curtsy in the world, and then, turning her back upon Philip, tripped to another part of the room.

Mr. Paxton's eyes blazed angrily.

Miss Simpson, a lady of twenty-eight or thereabouts, was spending a few days by invitation at Hazelmere, and was by no means an attractive companion. She was tall, angular, sallow, and plain to a painful degree. She was also a perfect gey upon horseback, although she affected to be exceedingly fond of riding.

Arley had purposely spoken loud enough for her to hear, consequently Philip was really bound by courtesy to "transfer his proposal to her."

Miss Simpson stopped, blushed and accepted the invitation, while he chafed and raved inwardly over the predicament that the mischievous girl had led him into, and devoutly hoped it would rain before morning.

But it did not, and as they rode away from the door at the appointed hour, Arley Wentworth watched them from behind a curtain in her own room, laughing at the figure they made, for Miss Simpson, in a green habit, looked more sallow than ever, and sat crooked upon her horse, while Philip's face was black with mortification and anger.

But Arley seemed strangely capricious for scarcely had they disappeared from view when she threw herself into her chair, and gave vent to another torrent of tears.

### CHAPTER IX.

"I DO NOT BELIEVE YOU."

Thus, for more than a week, this farce went on.

Philip Paxton was wratched from his joys and disappointment, yet, with a determination not to succumb, and with his new object in view, he strove to keep up an appearance of content and enjoyment which he was far from feeling.

Arley, having discovered, to her mortification and dismay, that she had given her love unsought, resolved to hide her secret, and to "game" to the last.

She had never been in wilder spirits, never more witty and merry, than during the ten days following the announcement that Lady Elaine's engagement to Wil Hamilton; yet, in spite of all, the company at Hazelmere began to notice and wonder at the strange pallor that had settled over her face, at the distastefulness of her eyes, the hard, unnatural ring of her nasal silvery laugh, and the unacceptable nervousness which made her start and shiver at the opening or shutting of a door, while the tears would rush into her eyes, and her lips would tremble, if any one spoke to her suddenly.

Another strange circumstance which added to her distress, Philip began to notice was her persistent avoidance of that gentleman.

Hitherto, they remembered, she had sought society, persisting in chatting and joking with him and drawing him on, until the two often became the life of the whole party.

Now, though she was not less gay, though her laughter and merry repartees were heard as often, if not oftener, than before, yet she managed to shun his companionship, and at any some chance she faced her old thrust upon him, she would somehow contrive to draw Miss Simpson or some one else equally distasteful about them, and then with marvellous dexterity slip away, leaving them mistress of the situation.

This, of course, became irksome, to say the least, to the victim of these arts, for he was of a gay company and a good time, and did not care to waste his energies playing the agreeable to smothering old maids or hateful girls, and he chafed angrily over it, particularly at one evening moment now was precious, and he was such a concerning his future prospects.



"Confound the little witch," he muttered angrily one day, when after several ineffectual attempts to secure a quiet *tête-à-tête* with Arley, she had as often eluded him. "I am almost inclined to believe that she is really a witch, and having read my designs is purposely, and even mockingly, evading me like a veritable 'Will-o'-the-wisp.' She is so confoundedly pretty and cute about it, too, that it only makes the pursuit more fascinating; and if it wasn't for the necessity of the case it might be more enjoyable. However, the end has got to come—the question must be decided before long for the state of my finances is precarious and won't stand this kind of life a great while."

The next day, after reasoning thus, he resolved to meet strategy with strategy.

Several of the guests who had remained at Hazelmere since the dinner party departed that morning, leaving the family and original guests by themselves.

Of course the lovers were absorbed in each other—that was to be expected. Philip had disappeared in some mysterious manner immediately after assisting Miss Simpson, with his very best grace, into her carriage, and waving her a smiling good-bye; and Arley, greatly relieved to be left to himself, and imagining that he had gone on a tramp, relaxed his vigilance somewhat, and made up her mind to have a quiet, restful day.

On the south side of the house there was a little terrace shaded by a stately old beech, and where a hammock had been swung to tempt anybody who might be lazy, or wish to while away a quiet hour or two with an interesting book.

This was a favourite resort of Arley's, and now, believing herself free and unwatched, she stole thither with book and pillow, and snugly laid herself away to enjoy her supposed liberty.

I should not have used the word enjoy, for she was very miserable.

Nothing but her pride kept her from giving up the battle and running away from both her troubles and friends, for she had promised to remain several weeks longer at Hazelmere.

But if she went she would have to give some reason for breaking her promise, and her face burned, and her blood boiled with shame and indignation as she thought of the true and only one that she could give.

"Was woman ever such a fool before?" she would cry in scorn and rage day after day, as she took herself to task for her folly. "Am I so much weaker and lower than others that I should thus disgrace my sex?"

But it was of no use to upbraid herself thus; she knew that she owed Philip Paxton with all the strength and passion of her young heart, and having given that love naked, the knowledge brought her only wretchedness and shame.

How quiet it was there upon the terrace as she swung idly back and forth! There was not a sound save the rustling of the leaves over her head, with now and then the twitter of a bird as it flitted for a moment among them.

Lady Hamilton was engaged in a consultation with the housekeeper. Sir Anthony was looking over accounts in the library. Wil and Lady Elaine had gone for a row on the lake, and Annie and Fred were arranging the list for invitations to their approaching wedding.

"What a luxury it is to be alone," Arley sighed, doubling her pillow to make her head higher, then tucking one pretty hand under her cheek she gazed dreamily out over the rich green lawn before her, and serenely believing herself to be utterly forgotten, for the time being, by the whole household, and as secure from intrusion as if she were locked within her own room.

But she did not remember that a large bay-window ran out from the house just beyond the terrace and that in the third story, and overlooking it, was Philip Paxton's room.

But so it was, and he had stationed himself there to watch his opportunity.

He had seen her steal out upon the terrace with her book and pillow, and watched while

she settled herself comfortably within the hammock. He knew that she was not reading, for she turned no leaves. He knew that she was not happy, for her face was sad and pale, except when, now and then, a vivid blush would mount to her brow, and her lips curl with scorn and pain.

She was very lovelily lying there in her graceful abandon, in spite of her evident troubles, and he would have been glad to sit there and watch her the whole morning through.

But he knew that now was opportunity, and he was determined not to lose it.

Softly as a cat creeps upon her prey before the final spring, he stole down stairs, out upon the lawn, and round to her very side before she was conscious that any one was approaching.

"You do not find your book very interesting, do you, Miss Wentworth?" he said, coming slowly up the steps, and standing directly before her, for he did not intend that she should circumvent him this time. His patience was at an end, and he was determined to settle an important question without further delay.

Arley started at the sound of his voice like a frightened fawn, the rich colour, which she tried in vain to repress, surging up to her temples.

"How do you know?" she demanded, with a pretty air of defiance, as she gracefully swung herself to a sitting posture in the hammock, the toes of her tiny slippers just touching the floor of the verandah.

If she had been caught napping she meant to fight hard to preserve her secret intent.

"How do I know?" he repeated, with a laugh that was very pleasant to her ears. "Because you have been lying here for the last half-hour, and have not turned a single leaf."

"And you have been watching me," she flashed back, indignantly, but turning hot and cold as she remembered of what and whom she had been thinking during that half-hour.

"Yes, I confess it. I could not help it, you made an such an attractive picture, and since you would not allow me to come near you, I have been obliged to worship at a distance," he returned, throwing a sort of sad tenderness into his tones.

"Mr. Paxton! I do not understand. You speak in enigmas," Arley said, assuming a look of cool surprise, though her nerves tingled to her very finger-tips at his words.

"Don't you understand, Miss Wentworth?" he inquired, bending a scrutinizing glance upon her. "Do you suppose I can believe that your strange oddness and avoidance of me during the past fortnight have been wholly unattended on your part? Can it be possible that you have unconsciously resorted to a hundred devices to keep out of my way, and to hold me at arm's length all that time, and until I can bear it no longer and have intruded upon you now, to make you tell me the cause of this sudden change?"

"Make me tell you!" Arley repeated, proudly, her cheeks vividly red, but with drooping eyes, while the fingers which were playing idly with her book trembled with nervousness.

"Yes," he said, decidedly. "I think I owe it to myself, and to you as well, to inquire into the cause of your displeasure, and how I have given offence."

This he had said with a sort of quiet dignity which impressed his listener more than any number of accusations would have done.

"I am not displeased—you have not offended me," stammered Arley, feeling miserably guilty for the way she had been treating him; then, conscious that she was making a worse blunder, she could have bitten her tongue off for having admitted so much.

"Then why on earth have you treated me so, Arley? Be honest forth with a show of passion." "Pardon me, Miss Wentworth," he continued, more quietly, "I am forgetting myself; but I am in trouble, and I am going away from Hazelmere. But I could not go

until I had made my peace with you; we were such good friends for awhile that I could not endure the thought of leaving you offended with me."

Arley had lost all her brilliant colour during the latter part of this speech, and she forgot everything, but that she was in trouble and going away, and she would be thrice wretched when she could see him no more.

"In trouble, Mr. Paxton?" she repeated, with gentle questioning, and raising her great dark eyes to his with a look which thrilled him in spite of the fact that he was playing a treacherous part. "I am very sorry."

"Thank you: and will you miss me?—will you be sorry to have me go?" he asked, bending nearer to her.

But Arley was too proud and high-spirited to fall into his arms in any such way as this. She could not forget how eager he had been in his pursuit of Lady Elaine, and, drawing back a trifle, she replied, somewhat coldly:

"It is always unpleasant to have an agreeable party broken up, and I am very sure that Annie and Wil will be sorry to have any of their guests depart."

Philip Paxton flushed at this, and began to fear that it might not be so easy as he had anticipated to win this independent little beauty with her snug fortune.

Still he had seen some things to encourage him—he had flashed beneath his glance, become confused when he had faced her with being offended with him, and grown pale and depressed when he had spoken of going away.

These were signs that pleased him, but she was so quick to evade him at every point that he found it very difficult to bring matters to a crisis.

He stood thinking a moment what it would be best to say next, and during that moment Arley arose.

She dare not trust herself longer alone with him; she had nearly betrayed herself once already, and she was anxious to get away to the solitude of her own room and out of all danger of a second yielding to such weakness.

"I shall have to ask you to excuse me, Mr. Paxton," she said, looking at her tiny watch, and then holding it up to him with an arch look. "See how late it is getting to be. You know Annie is to have a garden party this afternoon, and I must go and make myself as bewildering as possible for the occasion. You do not go to day, I hope," she added, as if that was a matter of secondary importance. "It will be a pity for you to lose all the fun."

He bit his lip with vexation, for she was making the task he had set himself to accomplish abominably hard.

"Why will you be so obtuse?" he cried, growing criticism to his very brow—"you compel me to be very abrupt for—I came here to tell you—to ask you—to be my wife! Arley, I love you."

It was very abrupt surely—very awkward, though there was a ring of desperation in his words that suited Arley better than if it had been a more finished declaration.

Her pulses leaped and bounded within her with joy, with which, however, very much of pain was mingled.

But her reply was as abrupt as his avowal had been; and it amazed and confounded him with its independent frankness.

She tilted her face—very beautiful it was too, with those crimson spots on her cheeks—and, looking him straight in the eyes, said:

"Mr. Paxton, I do not believe you."

"Miss Wentworth! I—excuse me—did I understand you aright? What reason can you have for doubting my assertion?" Philip Paxton asked, looking exceedingly astonished and somewhat crest-fallen at Arley's startling statement.

"Shall I tell you my reason?" Arley asked, very white about the mouth, but meeting his flashing eyes with a fearless, resolute look.

"Certainly. I think I have a right to an explanation. It is rather hard for a lady to tell a gentleman that she doubts his word,

when he lays bare the secrets of his heart to her," Philip replied, with an injured air.

"Very well. I shall tell you, then, but it will not be pleasant for you to hear," Arley replied, in a straightforward way. "I do not believe in your professed affection for me, because I know that ever since you came to Hazelmere, until quite recently, you have been trying to win Lady Elaine."

"No, let me go on," she said, as he seemed about to interrupt her, "for I have a confession to make with this statement. You have sought her ladyship upon every occasion, appropriating her to yourself whenever you could do so, and knowing all the time, as all of us have known, that Wil Hamilton had given her the deepest devotion of his heart. I knew that Lady Elaine returned his affection, and knowing this, I determined that, if possible, the course of true love should, for once, run smoothly. And so I—I have tried to thwart you whenever you attempted to force your attentions upon her. I do not wonder that you are surprised," she continued, as she saw him start and change colour, "but it was for this purpose that I sacrificed my maiden modesty, seeking your society, laughing and jesting with you, and keeping you by my side by every art which I could call to my aid. Yes, I played this part for the sole purpose of thwarting your designs, and to allow the lovers all the enjoyment possible; and when my end was achieved—when they announced their engagement, I—I couldn't keep up the farce any longer. I hated myself for having appeared—and I assure you it was all pretence—the bold and forward girl who had seemed to run after you and court your favour upon every occasion; and—and the reaction has perhaps made me treat you with more coldness and reserve than I ought to have done. So you perceive, knowing as I do that you were so interested in Lady Elaine, it is not strange that I do not believe you when you say that you love me. But I cannot understand," she went on, drawing herself up haughtily, "why you should make such an avowal to me, unless indeed you were driven to it from pique. I have heard of such things, but I think you might at least have spared me such a mortification."

She would have passed him as she ceased speaking, for she had wrought herself up to the highest pitch of indignation, and was quivering in every nerve; but he placed himself directly in her path, and would not let her go.

"No! no! I swear that pique has nothing whatever to do with it!" he cried, eagerly. "Hear me! You have accused me, and now you must listen to my defence!"

A hundred conflicting emotions had been raging within him while she was speaking. He had been angry and mortified to learn how well she had read him, and how he had been outwitted by this keen, brilliant girl.

It irritated him almost beyond endurance to think that he had never once suspected her strategy, but had, instead, walked meekly into the snare she had spread for him, and allowed her to beguile and dupe him to her heart's content.

He admired her, too, for her pluck in thus boldly avowing it to him, and giving her reasons for her doubt of his integrity in this straightforward manner.

Still, something in her way of speaking—a constraint, a sort of forced bravado, that slight twitching at the corners of her beautiful mouth, and the look of pain in her eyes—puzzled him, and made him feel that perhaps there might be a more serious reason for her keenness in reading his heart and motives than she would even be willing to acknowledge to herself.

Like a flash of light the thought came to him, that perhaps while she had been spreading this net for his unsuspecting feet, she had been caught in its meshes herself—while she had sought to keep him from winning the love of Lady Elaine, she had learned to love him before she knew it.

During the moment or two that he stood looking down into her expressive face, and

trying to think what to say to defend himself, he had grasped and analysed her feelings, and resolved to govern himself accordingly.

"Arley," he said, in a quick, earnest voice, "at any other time, under any other circumstances, I should have been mortified and angry at your frank confession; for a man does not like to be told that he has been outwitted by a girl, even though the one who has accomplished it may have twined herself about his heart in a way to make him love her very tenderly. But, forgive me if I say that I am led to believe that your eyes must have been sharpened by something more than common observation to make you read me so well as you have done. Darling"—and as he uttered this word, in a low, thrilling tone, he stooped and took possession of her two trembling hands—"let me 'confess' now. That first evening when I met Lady Elaine, I thought I had never seen any one so lovely. I was bewildered, fascinated, and I said to myself, 'This is love at first sight.' I did seek her—I own it—for she seemed to possess a strange power which drew me almost irresistibly toward her. But when I was thrown, or 'trapped,' as you say, into your society, I began to feel that the spice and fire of your more ardent nature was more congenial to me; your vivacity, your wit and never failing spirits, touched a chord in my heart that had never vibrated before, and I became an only too willing captive in the net which you say you spread for me. But I did not become wholly conscious of this until after Wil's engagement was announced and you began to shun me. You remember the saying—

"How blessing brighten as they take their flight," and I have fully realized it of late, I assure you, and my eyes have been rudely opened by your treatment of me to the fact that it is you whom I love, and you alone. Arley, I want you for my wife, and I should have told you this before but for the coldness and inexplicable neglect with which you have treated me since you began to hate yourself for making me love you. Dear, this is my trouble, or at least a portion of it—this was one reason why I was going away from Hazelmere. I could not remain and endure your aversion. Will you not bid me stay?—whisper but one word to tell me that I may hope, and I shall be happy. Do not tell me again that you do not believe me—try me, test me, and let me prove my sincerity to you." He spoke earnestly and passionately, and his words were very sweet to the ears of the listening girl.

Her heart longed to believe him—to trust him and be happy, though the still, small voice of her better judgment bade her "wait and be careful." Still his words seemed so plausible and sincere; it looked reasonable, she thought, that he should be at once attracted by the Lady Elaine, who was so much more beautiful—at least in her opinion—than anyone else. Everybody was attracted to her, but it did not follow that everybody must fall hopelessly in love with her.

It looked reasonable, too—though, perhaps, not very flattering to her—that he should not fully realize the state of his feelings towards her—Arley—until the great heiress had been won by some one else, and he began to miss her society, which she had taken such pains to make so fascinating to him; and so reasoning thus—perhaps she was very weak, but she could not help it—she yearned to accept all that he had offered her.

She stood with her face downcast, hesitating and trembling before him, not even withdrawing her hand from his clasp, so intent was she trying to analyze her own feelings, and his professions of attachment.

Her hesitancy emboldened him, and enfolding those small hands still closer in his clasp, he pleaded:

"Arley, something makes me hope, in spite of all the hard things that you have said to me; tell me that you trust me."

"Oh, if I might," she cried, with an intensity that startled him, while at the same

time it told him that she did love him—that his cause was won.

As she spoke she flashed an eager, searching glance into his face—a glance that sought to read his very soul.

"My darling," Philip cried, joyfully, "if you did not have some love for me you never would have said that. You may—you must trust me, and I will prove so loyal and true, so fond and devoted, that, by-and-by, you will wonder how it was possible for you ever to doubt me."

Looking down into that beautiful blushing face, into those glorious dark eyes, Philip Paxton's heart was stirred with tenderer feelings than it had ever experienced before, and he really meant at that moment all that he said; really believed that he should prove the loyal man and true that he had promised to be.

He did not know his own weakness—who does in fact?—he had not a suspicion of the temptations which in the future were to try the material of which he was made. It is so easy to make resolutions and promises; it is so hard, in our own strength, to keep them.

And lovely, pure-hearted, generous Arley Wentworth, won by the pleadings of her own heart, and his persuasive voice, smiled shyly, and, still looking into his eyes which seemed so frank and truthful, said, tremulously:

"I would like to trust you—I will trust you, Philip," and her fate was sealed.

He drew her to him with a glad cry, and touched his lip to her burning brow; and, to his honour be it said, he knew then that, fortune or no fortune, she was dearer to him than any woman in the world.

At the same time he knew also that he never should have asked her to marry him had it not been for her twenty thousand pounds.

"You do love me, Arley," he whispered.

"Haven't I confessed it enough yet to satisfy you?" she asked, archly.

"No, I shall want to hear it again and again. Tell me, when did you first discover that you cared for me?"

"Must I go away down into the valley of humiliation, and own that I lost my heart during that first ride from Ashdale station to Hazelmere," Arley retorted, laughing, but with face covered with blushes.

"Then I do not see why you needed to treat me as you have done during the last fortnight," Philip replied, regarding her thoughtfully.

"I was obliged to in order to hide my secret," Arley answered. "When Wil's engagement was announced I began to be very much ashamed of the part I had been playing. I could not bear that you should think me forward and unmaidenly, while, for the world, I would not have you or any one else suspect that I had given you my love unsolicited, and so I concealed my feelings under an assumed coldness."

"Well, I am bound to confess that you are an honest little body," Philip said, laughing.

"Thank you; I never intend to be anything else," replied truthful Arley.

Philip winced at this unconscious reproach, for he felt that however much he might be interested in her now, he had not been strictly honest in asking her to be his wife.

"I do not think I shall leave Hazelmere for a few days longer," he said, smiling. "May I announce another engagement this evening?"

"If you wish," Arley answered, frankly. "I have no desire to keep it a secret."

And so it was made known at dinner time, to the surprise of every one, that Arley Wentworth and Philip Paxton were betrothed lovers.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE FIRST WEDDING.

"Do you love him, Arley?"

"Why, my darling Lily of Mordaunt! how can you ask such a question? Do you suppose I should have accepted him if I had not?"

"I hope not—I trust not; yet I—it is very



unexpected to me—it seems very strange," sighed the gentle Elaine, a perplexed expression clouding her lovely face.

She had been perfectly amazed when Philip Paxton made known the fact of his engagement to Arley, and as soon as she could catch her by herself she assailed her with the above question, while her heart was filled with a strange foreboding on her account.

She had told no one, except Wil, of Philip's proposal to her, but she could not reconcile it with her idea of nobility and uprightness, that a man professing love for one woman should so suddenly transfer his offer of marriage to another. Surely something must be wrong somewhere.

She remembered how ardently he had pleaded for her love; he had told her that he loved her with his whole soul—that he would move the whole world to become worthy of her, if there might be hope to win her.

She remembered, too, that other interview, when he had told her that she had made a bad man of him—that if his future career was marked by reckless deeds and heartless acts, she might know to what to attribute them.

These things troubled her greatly, for she feared that in his anger and disappointment over her refusal he might have set himself to win the affections of Arley Wentworth out of pure bravado and antagonism, and this might be one of those heartless acts for which he charged her accountable.

She had grown to feel a deep and abiding love for the bright and interesting girl, who, though nearly two years older than herself, appeared to be that much younger; and Arley seemed to reciprocate this affection, notwithstanding that until very recently they had been utter strangers to each other.

One day she impulsively threw her arms around Lady Elaine's neck, and exclaimed,—

"How I wish you were my sister! You have no idea how I have always longed for a sister, and if the fates had only given you to me I should be supremely happy."

"Why, how singular! I have often wished the same thing since I became acquainted with you," returned the Lily of Moldant, with a look of surprise.

"Perhaps the fact that we are both orphans has caused it," she added, after a moment; "but I must confess, Arley, that I have never seen any one who has won her way so securely into my heart as you have done."

"That ought to make me very happy, and it does, dear," Arley returned, kissing her with tears in her eyes.

"I should have had a sister if she had lived," Lady Elaine resumed, "and she would have been just about your age, too. It has been a source of great sorrow to me that she could not have been spared."

"How old was she when she died?" Arley asked.

"A mere baby, not two years old, and I never saw her, because she died before I was born; but I was never weary of hearing mamma talk about her. She was entirely different from me, too, resembling mamma, who had dark hair and eyes, while I am a thorough Moldant in form, and feature, and complexion."

"What was this little one's name?" Arley asked, much interested in Lady Elaine's story.

"Alice; and she was exceedingly bright for her age. I can remember how papa used to talk about the smart things she would say and do in her baby way; and of course, being their first baby, they were very proud of her. I had a brother, too, who was younger than I; but he was taken also, and mamma never recovered from the shock of his death—she could not be reconciled to the loss of the only heir of Moldant," Lady Elaine concluded, with a sigh.

"What a strange world this is!" Arley remarked, reflectively; "some people have so many to love them, and others so few. But, dear Elaine, I am happy to have won your affection, and I hope that this friendship,

which amounts almost to sisterhood, will last throughout our whole life."

"I know of nothing that would cause me greater pain than to have it broken," Lady Elaine said, with a little sigh of apprehension, as she thought of Philip, and wondered how his marriage with Arley would affect it in the future.

"Let us put a seal upon it," she added, eagerly, after a moment; "let us exchange rings, Arley. You have a queer twisted ring on your third finger that I have admired ever since I first saw it; let me have it and I will give you this in return, and she drew off a lovely emerald surrounded by tiny pearls as she spoke.

"No, indeed, Elaine; that would not be a fair exchange at all," Arley opposed. "That is a very costly ring, while mine, though exceedingly odd, is only a simple affair, which I bought as a guard, to this diamond that grandpapa gave me two years ago."

"Never mind, I want it," persisted Lady Elaine, "and I want you to have this; so, if there are no precious associations connected with it, put it here on this finger, and let me put mine upon yours."

She held out her slender hand as she ceased speaking, and Arley obediently slipped the twisted ring upon the third finger.

Then taking Arley's hand, she put the emerald above the diamond.

"With this ring I wed thee, dear," she said, with a fond smile, but with a little tremulousness in her tones, "so remember that you are my especial friend for all time, in sickness or in health, for better or for worse, it will be all the same—be sure that you never forget it, Arley."

Arley Wentworth kissed her with trembling lips.

"You would compel any one to love you almost against their will," she said, "but I certainly never shall forget."

(To be continued.)

**THE EIDER DUCK.**—The eider duck is one of the most valuable birds of the northern regions, supplying, as it does, a most important article of commerce, and furnishing one of the chief means of support for the people. For these reasons the eider duck is zealously guarded and cherished by the inhabitants of Norway and all the northern islands; and in Iceland the killing of one of these birds or the secreting of an egg is rigorously punished by law. The eider duck, as is well known, robs her own breast of down with which to line her nest, and also reserves a supply of feathers as a covering for her eggs while she is away in pursuit of food. The down is thus easily secured by the owners of the island, who do not hesitate to rob the nest a second and even a third time after it has been patiently rebuilt by the mother bird. The eggs are also daily collected, and constitute an important article of food. Only one or two are left in the nest to hatch, and those which are not consumed are pickled for winter use. The breeding places of the eider duck are private property, and are the source of a large income to their owners. The plan most frequently adopted is to remove both eggs and down, when the female lays another set of eggs and covers them with fresh down. These are again taken, and then the male is obliged to give his help by taking down from his own breast, and supplying the place of that which was stolen. The down of the male bird is pale coloured, and as soon as it is seen in the nest, the eggs and down are left untouched in order to keep up the breed. In the male bird the top of the head is velvety-black, and the cheeks are white. The ear-covers and back of the head is pale green. The back is white. The neck and upper parts of the breast are white, the lower parts of the neck pale buff, and the breast and abdomen black, relieved by a patch of white on the flanks. The bill and legs are green. The female is reddish brown, mottled with darker brown. The total length of the bird rather exceeds two feet.

## HOWLING DOGS.

IF Mr. D'Eyncourt is rightly reported to have said that a man can be prosecuted for keeping a dog which howls to the disturbance of his master's neighbours, we are afraid he is wrong in his law; and he will have encouraged a number of unneighbourly persons to enter into vexatious quarrels with those who live next door to them.

A howling dog is a great nuisance, so is a loud-growing cock, so is a badly-played piano; and schoolboys home for the holidays are the worst nuisance of all to those who take no family interest in their noise and their pranks. But dwellers in cities must bear and forbear.

A man may be prohibited from keeping two howling dogs, because two dogs are not necessary to his protection; but no existing law can debar him from keeping one dog, and if the brute howls and barks in discharge of his duty as sentry, what is to be done—so long as burglars fear the yelping dogs most?

These poor creatures are our four-footed police, and that they do much to keep our houses safe is acknowledged without any professional jealousy by their colleagues of the biped force. We are not saying that a man whose nerves are worried by the noise of his neighbour's dogs, cocks, cats, or children ought to have no remedy.

Carlyle suffered acutely from some fowls kept within earshot of his study, and it would have been a public misfortune if the owner of these birds had refused to part with them when he was told what misery they inflicted.

People ought to be neighbourly, but it must not be forgotten that, while some persons whose occupations demand quiet are entitled to every consideration when they complain even of little noises, others too frequently object to the natural hubbub of domestic life out of pure cantankerousness.

The man who dislikes his neighbour will be disposed to hate his neighbour's dog, and call him a howler without much thought as to whether he is bearing false witness. — *Graphic*.

**THE QUEEN**, who takes great interest in the Royal Tapestry Works at Windsor, has just purchased three panels, the work of the English apprentices, representing Osborne, Windsor, and Buckingham Palace. These designs are treated with foliage, and are intended to illustrate the seasons. Balmoral, which represents winter, is already in the possession of Her Majesty. Windsor, Buckingham Palace, and Osborne will represent spring, summer, and autumn respectively.

**OUR LANGUAGE.**—The task of preparing a new dictionary of the English language, is, perhaps, about as grave, intricate, and laborious as man could undertake. Of all tongues, ours is the most inexact and scattering, to begin with. It was largely borrowed, in the first instance, from foreign sources; and we have been adding to it from the vocabularies of other nations for centuries. More than this, we alone of all the people on the earth have a common habit of coining new words, and giving old words new meanings to suit our whims or to emphasize a particular fact or object. By such means, our lexicon is made to undergo continual change, and to be, as it were, in an unceasing hide-and-seek with itself. The words and expressions in general use two hundred years ago are many of them absurdities and vulgarities now; even the prevailing English speech of the last century is not at all that of to-day; and it would not be too much to say, probably, that every person who lives to exceed forty years, must find it necessary to alter his "English as she is spoken" in a very considerable degree from the style in which it was taught to him at the start, if he would make sure of being understood and of escaping correction and derision.

## PACETTE.

Brother is regarded as very silly, but, after all, it is the spoon that makes the greatest stir in the world.

When a man's chestnut curls begin to turn grey, it means that he is fifty years old; but when they begin to turn black—that means that he is sixty.

What is it that you like about that girl?" asked one young man of another. "My arm," was the brief reply.

—(To lady who has been discoursing on the science of horticulture).—"Ah, yes, you can tell me the reason why your plants grow so luxuriantly, didn't I wish you would tell me why my musketeer does not thrive better?" Lady.—"Well, I should imagine it is kept too much in the shade!"

A young gentleman asked a young lady what she thought of the "marriage state in general." "Not knowing, can't tell," was the reply; "but if you and I could put our heads together, I could soon give you a definite answer."

A weather gentleman, who owns a country seat, nearly lost his wife, who fell into a river which flows through his estate. He announced the narrow escape to his friends, expecting their congratulations. One of them—an old bachelor—wrote as follows:—"I always told you that river was too shallow."

An epitaph in a rural churchyard reads thus:—"Here lies Bernard Lightfoot, who was accidentally killed in the forty-fifth year of his age. This monument was erected by his grateful family."

A countryman, who recently visited London, entered one of the hotels and sat down to dinner. Upon the bill of fare being handed him by the waiter, he remarked that "he didn't care 'bout readin' now—he'd wait till after dinner."

"His face has not the marks of a criminal," remarked a sympathetic clergyman of a prisoner, who was arraigned for a brutal attempt at murder. "No," replied the prosecutor; "his face has not; but just look at his victim's!"

An amateur, after attending church on a recent Sunday, was asked her opinion of the sermon. "Oh, I guess I suppose," she replied; "but what big feet the minister had! I was so ordered in his feet that I forgot to listen to his sermon!"

From sixteen to twenty they knew more than I did," said an old farmer, talking about his boys. "At twenty-five they know as much; at thirty they are willing to hear what I had to say; at thirty-five they asked my advice; and I think, when they get to be forty, they will actually acknowledge that the old man does know something."

A Trembling Tappanist.—At a family party a young prodigy was executing on the piano a symphony, more military than pastoral. Parents and friends were in ecstasies. "Isn't it beautiful?" exclaimed an old aunt, speaking to the neighbour from next door, who had joined the party. "What splendid execution! You seem to hear the sound of the soldier's footstep dying away in the distance." "Ah," said the neighbour, "if they would only take the piano with them!"

A customer who wanted a pair of stockings stepped into a shop and asked to be shown a good pair. The shopkeeper placed five pairs before him, out of which the gentleman selected a pair, the price of which he was informed, was four shillings. "That is too much," said the customer. "I am a friend of your house, and always come to your shop, and you must let me have the stockings for something less." "I am thankful to you for your patronage," said the shopkeeper; "but I cannot let you have the stockings for less. I am obliged to live on my friends, because my enemies never come to buy anything of me."

The shame that comes from hanging is but hemp-like honour.

"Yes," she said, "I always obey my husband, but I reckon I have something to say about what his commands shall be."

"I'd hate to be in your shoes," said a woman, as she was quarrelling with a neighbour. "You couldn't get into them," sarcastically replied the neighbour.

"Sir," said a master to a sleepy-headed apprentice, "have you ever seen a snail?" "Yes, sir." "Then you must have met it for you could never have overtaken it!"

LADY (to a small boy with a dog).—"Johnny, does that dog bark at night?" Johnny (who is a connoisseur in dogs).—"No, ma'am. He barks at cats and other dogs."

"I preserve my equilibrium under all circumstances," she was heard to say, in a pause of the music, to the tow-haired youth who was her escort. "Do you?" He answered, softly. "Mother came here." Then the music resumed.

"I don't see the bell," said a handsome woman at the front door of a house to a man shovelling coal. "Faith, ma'am, an' ye wud, though, as ye were to look in the glass," said the gallant coal-shoveller.

How to Secure a Long Honeymoon.—Easter is said to be the proper time for marrying. This gives the couple a long honeymoon, and they will be in just the right condition to repent when the next Lent comes round.

A SKISME hotel-keeper overcharged a traveller for bad accommodation. "What will you do when you have killed the goose that lays the golden egg?" asked the grumbling traveller. "Wait for another goose!" said the hard-faced landlord.

"Women's rights!" exclaimed a man, when the subject was broached. "What more do they want? My wife bosses me; our daughters boss us both, and the servant girl bosses the whole family. It's time the men were allowed some rights."

A man wanting his wife to let him in when he was to come home late at night, she said:—"But, my dear, I shall catch cold coming down so late to let you in." To which he replied, "Oh, no, my love. I'll rap you up thoroughly before you come down."

A young man suggested to a lady friend that this was leap year and playfully said that she "would have to take him to some place now." "All right," said she, "there is a play to-morrow night. Get the tickets, George, and I will take you." And of course he had to get them. It is a cold day when a girl gets left.

A transient traveller took his place at the table of a Western hotel, where the landlord was the only waiter, and, after finishing a very scanty meal, he said peremptorily, "I should like some dessert." Dessert? What's that? We ain't got none." "Well, give me some pie," "Pie, thunder! We ain't got no pie! Help yourself to the mustard."

"Everybody must grow old, you know," said Mrs. Bass to her husband, who had been remarking upon the rapid aging of one of Mrs. B.'s dear friends. "Not everybody, dear," replied Bass; "everybody who lives long enough, you mean;" adding, pathetically, "I should grieve to think that my sweet wife would ever grow old." It is whispered that the Bases are not living on the best of terms just now.

Not Guilty.—When Michael Boyle, a veteran defendant, was called to plead to a charge of stealing a pair of pantaloons worth ten shillings from Thomas Ralph, of Princeton, he replied, "I am not guilty of that." "You didn't take the pantaloons?" Prosecutor Rensley asked. "Oh, yes, I took them." "Why do you say, then, that you are not guilty?" "Because Tom Ralph never owned a pair of pants worth ten shillings." (Laughter.)

"Doss deash and all?" No, but the lawyers do if they can get up against about the will.

JOHN BOYLE O'ROURKE has written a poem about "A Lost Friend." We inform John that his friend is never lost again.

A man in Rochester fancied himself Rip Van Winkle. He must have been in the town for twenty years.

An impecunious fop said that his straightened circumstances were owing to his failure in the "yarn business;" that is, nobody would believe his stories.

The speaker who has too many heads to his discourse will find it difficult to cure attentive ears to all of them.

Brainiac trainers say that animal-cub's great terror at the sight of the mouse. This is the only respect in which the animal resembles a woman. It can't go any distance without taking a truck with it.

A poor gentle contribution entitled "Why do I live?" This is easy to answer. It is because he sends his contributions to this office, instead of bringing them in person.

"My friend," remarked a temperance worker to a man who had once more begun to imbibe, "I am sorry to hear that you have broken the pledge." "Oh, never mind," was the cheerful reply, "I can sign another just as good."

"Cooking potatoes," says the American farmer, "are eaten greedily by hogs." Quite right. We have seen a hog at an hotel take the last one out of a dish before any human being at the table had a bite.

"I wish I had eyes in the back of my head," said a young lady the other evening. "Why?" asked a devoted admirer breathlessly. "So that I could see what was going on without the trouble of turning my head." "You can turn my head without any trouble," responded the youth, with a gloomy sigh.

MADAM:—"What did you mean by telling me that Joiner's play drew so splendidly in other cities? Why, we've played to empty benches ever since we put it on; and you tell me that in New York you turned away hundreds nightly." Leading man:—"So we did. I never knew a play that would turn away a crowd so quickly as Joiner's."

He was just on the point of proposing, and she, with a palpitating heart, was straining her ear to catch the words she so longed to hear, when a little mouse ran across the floor. "Did she scream or faint?" you ask. Oh, no, gentle inquirer, she did not. She paid no attention to the mouse.

ASTRONOMERS tell us in their own simple, intelligible way that the gradual lengthening of the days is due to the "obliquity of the earth to the terrestrial horizon." This ought to be at rest the foolish idea that the days are longer because the sun rises earlier and sets later.

"Arrah!" Teddy, my boy, be just after telling me how many chases I have in this here sack, and faith if ye tell me I'll give ye the whole lot."—"Fire," said Teddy. "Arrah! Be me sowl, bad luck to the man that could ye."

Who can doubt woman's supremacy? Centuries upon centuries ago, while yet the world was in its "salad days," the true relation between man and woman was recognized. These two quaint lines contain the history of domestic life from the beginning, and they are not likely to be proven false by the future.—"As the good man saith, so say we; but as the good woman saith, so must it be."

A lady recently had a remarkable experience with a new Irish servant. "Biddy," said she, one evening, "we must have some sausages for tea. I expect company."—"Yes, ma'am."—The time arrived, and with it the company. The table was spread, the tea was simmering, but no sausages appeared.—"Where are the sausages, Biddy?" the lady inquired.—"And sure they're in the tigger, ma'am! Didn't you tell me we must have 'em for tea?"



## SOCIETY.

A numerous and distinguished company assembled in Henry VII.'s Chapel in Westminster Abbey on Wednesday afternoon, the 25th of June, to witness the marriage of the Hon. Hallam Tennyson, eldest son of the Poet Laureate, with Miss Audrey Boyle, only daughter of Mr. Charles John Boyle.

The bride was attired in rich white satin, simply but elegantly made, the front being draped with flounces of Brussels point de gaze; and over a few sprays of orange blossom in her hair was arranged a large handsome lace veil, which nearly concealed her features and fell in graceful folds about her. Her veil was fastened with diamond stars, and she carried a lovely bouquet.

The bridesmaids looked exceedingly well in dresses of ivory-white silk, covered with Indian muslin and trimmed with lace, and lace bouquets trimmed with large blue feather quills; the children wearing dresses to correspond, made after Sir Joshua Reynolds, and hats to match. Each carried a bouquet of pink and white carnations and maidenhair fern.

Lady Tennyson wore French grey moiré and white lace, with close white Quaker-like bonnet. Lady Sarah Spencer's was a handsome dress of bronze satin, trimmed with ribbon velvet and lace, and a lace bonnet. Mrs. Gladstone was in blue velvet and satin, trimmed with white lace, and wore a bonnet to match. The Countess of Selborne wore plum-coloured satin, with bonnet to harmonise; and Lady Sophia Palmer's dress was composed of coffee-coloured lace over white silk, and lace bonnet to match. Lady Wolsey looked well in a steel-grey satin skirt, draped with fine black lace, and jacket bodice of grey broché velvet, with steel buttons; bonnet and feathers or feathers; her daughter also being simply dressed in grey broché with large grey straw hat and feathers.

The marriage of the Marquis Camille Desai, Knight of St. John of Jerusalem, with Miss Eleanor Brodley Rutherford, daughter of the late Mr. John Buckley Rutherford, which took place at the Pro-Cathedral, Kensington, was a very stylish affair. On the arrival of the bride, soon after half-past eleven, accompanied by her mother, she was met by her little page, Master Bayly, in Highland garb, who supported her train, and on entering the opened building was received by her six bridesmaids, two of whom were children.

The bride was attired in bodice and train of cream broché, the latter being caught back with feathers, flowers, and diamond buckles, over a petticoat of rich satin duchesse, covered with old lace; feathers, orange blossoms, and myrtle were arranged in the hair, covered by a long white veil, which was fastened by diamond stars, and her ornaments included diamond pendant, earrings, and three diamond stars, the bridegroom's gifts.

The bridesmaids wore dresses of cream lace over cream satin, trimmed with bouquets of crimson and pink carnations. The four elder ladies wore cream lace bonnets, and carried bouquets of crimson and pink carnations; and the children wore large Lophorn hats and cream feathers and carried gilt baskets of flowers. Each wore a gold bangle, the bridegroom's gift.

The doors of Norfolk House were, on the 20th June, opened after some years for a ball, which, in the absence of the Duke and Duchess of Norfolk, was given by Lady Edmund Talbot. The capabilities of the mansion are such that there was no crowd, and dancing was a real pleasure in the beautiful ball-room, lighted in the most perfect manner by innumerable wax candles. Lady Edmund received the company in the first drawing-room, and near her stood the Earl and Countess of Arundel, Lady Alice Bertie, and Lady Margaret Howard.

## STATISTICS.

"HER MAJESTY'S Tobacco Pipe," as the *Kilm* at the Custom House for cremating contraband nicotine is jocosely termed, must in these days of Liberal saving be looked upon as rather a costly luxury. In the three years from 1880 to 1883 no less than 45,000 lbs. of tobacco has been seized, and all of this, with the exception of some 7,000 lbs., has been burned in the capacious bowl.

The fruit crop in Germany is most abundant this year. Round Heidelberg the cherries are in profusion, and one little village alone sends off daily some eighty car-loads, with the prospect of realising a profit of 24,000 for the season's crops. Most of the strawberries come from Saxony, whence they are sent to a Strawberry Exchange at Berlin.

## GEMS.

He is well pleased who is well satisfied.

The world does not require so much to be informed as to be reminded.

EVERY base occupation makes one sharp in its practice, and dull in every other.

You cannot bring the best out of a man unless you believe the best is somewhere in him.

WHATEVER we may pretend, interest and vanity are the sources of most of our afflictions.

EVEN a fool does not choose a fool for a favourite. He knows better than that; he must have something to lean against.

It is one of the most promising traits of human nature that heretofore selfishness always ex-kindles the enthusiasm of mankind.

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

**APPLE MARMALADE.**—Take one pint of green apples to half a pack of green for grapes. Quarter the apples, and put them on to stew with a little water. When quite stewed, put it through a colander. To each pint add one pound of white sugar. Cover it in a preserving-kettle, and season it with grated lemon-peel and nutmeg. It must cook steadily for two hours, until it is a clear dark green, and be stirred constantly to prevent it from burning. Just before it gets cold flavour with rose-water and put it into moulds.

**SOWNED PEARS.**—Cut a number of pears into halves, peel them, and trim them so as to get them all of a size, put them into an enamelled saucepan, with just enough water to cover them, and a good allowance of loaf sugar, the thin rind of a lemon, a few cloves, and sufficient prepared cinnamon to give them a good colour. Let them stew gently till quite done. Arrange them neatly on a dish, strain the syrup, let it re-duce on the fire, and when cold pour it over the pears.

**TO PRESERVE QUINCES.**—Take one pound of sugar to one pound of fruit. Parboil the quinces, then pare carefully, and take out the cores. After boiling up the skins and cores, take one pint of the water in which they were boiled to every pound of sugar. Let the sugar melt, then add the fruit, and let it boil quickly for nearly an hour. Cover the pan while boiling. Boil the seed separately in a thin muslin bag.

**ORANGE MARMALADE.**—To every pound of fruit add one pint of boiling water and one and a half pounds of sugar; boil the oranges until perfectly soft, cut them up, remove the pulp, and scrape well the inside of the best skins, which cut very fine for chips; add the water to the pulp, and strain; measure the liquid, add to it the sugar and chips (not too many), and boil fifteen or twenty minutes; skim particularly.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

POPE LEO's day's work is minutely described by the Ultramontane journal *Germania*. The Pope rises at six, spends some time in meditation, and celebrates Mass at seven. From eight o'clock he is busy with correspondence until eleven, when he gives audience, receiving the bishops, ambassadors, pilgrims, &c. He then spends an hour and a half walking in the Vatican gardens with his private secretary, and attended by two guards; or drives in the grounds if the weather is bad. At 2 p.m. the Pope dines off one kind of meat, two dishes of vegetables, fruit, and a glass of claret, and after a short rest he works again till half-past-four, when he receives various Church officials. Reading foreign journals occupies the evening after eight o'clock, his Holiness studying the French and Italian organs himself, while interesting articles from the German and English papers are translated to him. Prayers follow at half-past-nine. Leo XIII. then sups off soup, an egg, and salt, and retires.

The Lady Mayoress, on June 18, opened a bazaar in the concert-room known as Cadby Hall, within a few minutes' walk from Addison-road station, Kensington, held in aid of the parish charities. Pretty and useful articles were offered for sale at moderate prices and in bewildering variety. The ladies had worked hard, to judge by the results displayed upon the ample stalls which were arranged round the room. Among the ornamental fancy-furniture for the drawing-room many novelties might be observed, such as wicker baskets covered with silver-leaf, work-boxes made of plaited braid, and phreusions in the form of miniature wall pockets. Perhaps the prettiest keepsakes of the bazaar were the dainty baskets of cut flowers of fairy dimensions, the handle just large enough to go over one's little finger.

**FACTS ABOUT LEAVES.**—As is well known, a tree cannot grow without leaves. These are put forth every year, and are a contrivance for vastly increasing the surface. An oak tree of good size exposes several acres of surface to the air during the growing season. It has been estimated that the Washington elm at Cambridge, Mass., not a very large tree, exposes about five acres of foliage; if we include both sides of the leaves. Leaves are more nearly comparable to stomachs than lungs. A leaf is a laboratory for assimilating or manufacturing raw materials into plant fabric. The cellular structure of the leaves, wood and bark of a tree, is a complicated subject to treat in a popular way. It requires a vast surface of leaves to do a little work. By counting the leaves on a seedling oak, and estimating the surface of both sides of each, we can see how many inches are needed to build up the roots and stem for the first year. After the first year the old stem of the oak bears no leaves. It is dependent on the leaves of the branches, or its children, for support. A tree is a sort of community, each part having its own duties to perform. The root hairs take up most of the nourishment. The young roots take this to the larger ones, and they in turn, like the branches of a river, pour the food of crude sap into the trunk, which conveys it to the leaves. The assimilated or digested sap passes from the leaves to all growing parts of the plant, and a deposit is made where most needed. If a branch is much exposed to the winds, the base of it has a certain support or certain amount of nourishment. So with the trunk of a tree. If the base of a branch or the main trunk is much exposed to the winds and storms, a much thicker deposit of food is made there. The winds give a tree exercise, which seems good to help make it strong. Our toughest wood comes from trees growing in exposed places. The limbs of a tree are all the time striving with each other to see which shall have the most room and the most sunshine. While some parish in the attempt, or meet with only very indifferent success, the strongest of the strong buds survive.

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**LAURA.**—The work is by Mr. Wilkie Collins, and can be obtained from any good bookseller.

**ANXIOUS LEARNER.**—You neither cannot obtain control of the child except by application to a magistrate.

**HANDY.**—We regret we are unable to inform you. You might learn by writing, with full particulars, to the Consul-General at Cairo.

**F. G. A.**—Evidently a handsome girl, and of marriageable age, to whom the photograph does not do justice.

**C. P. W.**—There would be no harm in going to the picnic. If the weather be fine it ought to be a very enjoyable day's outing.

**CARRIE F.**—Such a fellow is utterly unworthy of notice. Your best plan is never to speak to him again. We do not make any charge for answering questions.

**W. G. G.**—Cricket is of comparatively modern origin, but it has taken the precedence of all other out-door games as a thoroughly national pastime.

**C. V. S.**—A man should not brook a downright insult from another without notice, but if he can avoid losing his temper he will certainly have the best of it in the long run.

**AMTIA.**—It is almost impossible for you to teach yourself the piano at your age, and if you could you would lose so much time at the commencement that you would probably get disgusted with yourself before you make enough progress to be rid of the drudgery. Even with a good master, it would take at least three years before you could be really proficient.

**A. D. E.**—The lines—  
Oh, for a tongue to curse the slave,  
Whose treason, like a deadly blight,  
Came o'er the counsels of the brave,  
To mock them in their hour of night,  
are by Thomas Moore in "Lalla Rookh."

**L. B.**—Spirits or oil of turpentine is made from crude turpentine by distillation, the solid part which is left being the common yellow resin used in making soap, candles, varnish, fireworks, for calking the seams of vessels, and for putting on violin bows. Oil of turpentine is used in medicine, in making varnishes, and for mixing with paints. When distilled a second time and purified it becomes camphene, once much used to burn in lamps.

**E. W. G.**—Good housekeepers are frequently annoyed by oil-marks on papered walls against which careless or thoughtless persons have laid their heads. These unsightly spots may be removed by making a paste of cold water and pipe-clay or fuller's earth, and laying it on the surface without rubbing it on, else the pattern of the paper will then likely be injured. Leave the paste on all night. In the morning it can be brushed off and the spot will have disappeared, but a renewal of the operation may be necessary if the oil-mark is old.

**A. B. W.**—A free application of soft soap to a flesh burn almost instantly removes the fire from the flesh, according to a medical man who had been burned repeatedly himself. If the injury is very severe, as soon as the pain ceases, apply linseed-oil and then dust over with fine flour. When this last covering dries hard repeat the oil and flour, dressing until a good coating is obtained. When the latter dries, allow it to stand until it cracks and falls off, as it will do in a day or two, and a new skin will be found to have formed where the skin was burned.

**ELAINE.**—The fellow is a contemptible humbug, and belongs to that shallow class that mistake low cunning for cleverness. It is lucky you met your cousin in good time. There is now a golden opportunity for both of you to treat him with the scorn he so richly merits. It would be just as well that his character should be thoroughly exposed among all your young lady friends, that they may show him that deceit cannot be successfully covered by a plausible tongue and a handsome face.

**J. H. M.**—Platonic love is the name applied to affection between two persons of different sex which is presumed to be unaccompanied by any amorous passion, and to be based upon moral and intellectual affinities. The expression originated in the views of Plato, who held that the common sexual love of the race is only a subordinate form of that perfect and ideal love of truth which the soul should cultivate.

**LIEKIE McD.**—Dunedin, the capital of Otago, is the largest, best built, and most important city in New Zealand. It has been considerably enlarged and improved of late years. There are very good shops, handsome public buildings, churches of all the chief denominations, recreation grounds, botanical gardens, a race course, two theatres, and very pleasant suburbs. If you have friends there you will find it a very agreeable place to live in.

**"INDUSTRIOUS"** asks for recipes by which he can make black and carmine ink. For the black, boil, in one quart of water, four ounces of shallic and two ounces of borax until dissolved; add two ounces of gum arabic dissolved in a little hot water; boil and add enough of a well triturated mixture of equal parts indigo and lampblack to produce the proper colour. Let this stand for a few hours, and then draw off, and bottle. For carmine ink:—Half a drachm of powdered drop lake, and eighteen grains of powdered gum arabic dissolved in three ounces of ammonia water.

**E. Mc C.**—The best plan to make canaries sing is to place them in a room with other singing birds.

**BEILINDA.**—We know nothing of the firm, and do not vouch for the reliability of advertisers.

**ELLEN A.**—We do not know where the preparation can be procured.

**E. L. G.**—The *Times* newspaper was first printed by steam machinery in 1814.

**R. J. B.**—Benzine will clean kid gloves better and more expeditiously than anything else.

**O. S. B. T.**—It is a matter of individual choice. Do not buy anywhere until you have visited various parts of the country.

**FRANCIS M.**—You write a very nice hand. Never mind "society;" the companionships of home are best for good boys.

**LADY L.**—No young lady can dress on the sum you name. It ought to be your right to earn what you need by the pretty art.

**T. S. E.**—To clean silver, mix two teaspoonfuls of ammonia in a quart of hot soap-suds. Put in the silverware and rub it, using an old nailbrush or toothbrush for the purpose. Then wipe it dry with a soft cloth and polish it with camels leather.

**M. M.**—John Milton was a strong advocate of liberty in every form. It is a difficult work to settle the proper meaning, but the idea conveyed in John Stuart Mill's definition is perhaps good as any other. He tells us that liberty is perfect freedom of thought, expression, and action, in so far as they do not interfere with the rights of others.

## IN THE TWILIGHT.

In the twilight, in the gloaming,  
When the sun has sunk to rest,  
Then I linger—fondly roaming  
With the one I love the best.

Then I whisper, then I murmur  
All the joy that through the day,  
Fent within my heart's deep chamber,  
In a laden silence lay.

Then my lips are swift to utter  
All the rapture of my soul,  
And, as doves white-winged flutter,  
So my thoughts without control

Issue bravely from the portal,  
Where beneath a lock and key,  
They had dwelt, until night's presence  
Set the tiny prisoners free.

M. C. B.

**L. C. B.**—1. Louis means "a defender of the people," Alice "a noble;" Henrietta and Harriet are the feminine of Henry, which means "a rich lord." 2. Take no notice of what he says. He is only trying to tease you, and the more notice you take of him the more he will keep on. Indifference will soon stop him.

**P. W. F.**—1. Among the Eastern nations the ruby was regarded as a beneficent stone, which cured evils arising from the unkindness of friends. 2. No. 3. There is considerable disparity, but if the couple are well matched in other respects, the difference in age is not an insuperable objection.

**ROSIE N.**—The art of being agreeable to others is to appear well pleased with all the company, and rather to seem well entertained with them than to bring entertainment to them. A man thus disposed, perhaps, may not have much learning nor any wit, but if he has common sense and something friendly in his behaviour, it conciliates men's minds more than the brightest parts without a courteous disposition; and when a man of such a turn comes to old age he is almost sure to be treated with respect. It is true, indeed, that we should not dissemble and flatter in company; but a man may be very agreeable, in strict consistency with truth and sincerity, by a prudent silence, where he cannot conquer, and by a pleasing assent where he can. Now and then you meet with a person so exactly formed to please that he will gain upon every one that hears or beholds him; this disposition is not merely the gift of nature, but frequently the effect of much knowledge of the world and a command over the passions.

**D. V. W.**—The daguerreotype process was the name given to the original photographic process as introduced by one of its inventors, M. Daguerre. Joseph Niepce and Daguerre had each independently been experimenting for the purpose of discovering a method of obtaining permanent pictures by the chemical action of the sun. A process by which that result could be obtained was discovered by Niepce, and he and Daguerre united to perfect it. After the death of Niepce, in 1833, Daguerre prosecuted his researches alone, and made such improvements in the process that Niepce's son consented that the invention should be known by Daguerre's name only. The invention was announced at the session of the academy of science in January 1839. The same year Daguerre published the first practicable process for taking pictures by the agency of light, for which he received from the French government an annuity of 4,000 francs to Niepce's son, and one of equal amount for himself; the latter was increased to 6,000 francs upon his agreeing to make public also such information as he possessed in regard to dioramas and any further improvements he should make in the daguerreotype.

**L. G.**—Why not get married and thus end all perplexity and disagreement? Your engagement has lasted quite long enough.

**C. C. R.**—You must strive to overcome your bashfulness and timidity by going into society as much as possible. "Faint heart never won a fair lady" is as true as when written generations ago. You write very nicely. Do not be in too great a hurry to disclose your love. Wait until you are sure that it is acceptable.

**ORIANA.**—We know of nothing that will prevent the hair from turning grey. The colouring principle of the hair is in some constitutions secreted by organs so delicate that bodily disorder or mental affliction will gradually destroy their functions, and the hair will not only turn grey, but become white as snow. The hair should be washed at least once a week. Salt water is not injurious. The plucking out of gray hairs is "love's labour lost." Let them alone.

**ANXIOUS LEARNER.**—Homoeopathy is a system of medicine introduced into practice by Samuel Hahnemann, a German physician, and first received its distinctive name in a work published by him in Dresden in 1810. Allopathy is a word created by homoeopaths to distinguish other systems of medical practice from their own. Having adopted the opinion that "like cures like" as the fundamental principle of the doctrine, Hahnemann gave to his own system the name of homoeopathy—derived from two Greek words, signifying similar and disease—and applied to other systems the name allopathy, from words meaning other and disease. It is quite impossible for us to give a definite mention of all the points of difference between these two systems. They seldom meet in conference, as they differ widely in their mode of application of remedies for disease.

**D. H. W. M.**—We can give but little account of Eric the Red, the navigator, who commanded the first expedition to Greenland in 983. The land had been discovered by the Northman Gunnbjorn in 876 or 877, who saw the eastern coast, but was wrecked on the rocks afterward called by his name, and did not land upon the main coast. Eric was the son of a jarl of Jades in Norway, and sailed from Breidford, Iceland, in search of the land seen by Gunnbjorn, a tradition of which still lingered in Iceland. Reaching it, the country pleased him, and he called it Greenland. In 985 he returned to Iceland, and sailed thence with twenty-five ships loaded with emigrants, to found a colony. From this sprang the alleged discovery of America by the Northmen some years later.

**EVELINA.**—Children dress in mourning for parents one year. During the first three months heavy crapes and trimmings are used. Then, for three months, silk, slightly trimmed with crapes, is used. At the end of six months, crapes is laid aside, and plain black, with black gloves and ornaments, is worn for one month. During the eighth and ninth months gray gloves, gold, silver, and pearl ornaments are admissible; and during the last three months half-mourning is donned and worn until the end of the year. No society is indulged in for two months, and no gay assemblages are attended until crapes is laid aside. Many people now put on black, but no mourning, for deaths of even the nearest relatives.

**L. D. P.**—There is a difference of opinion as to the year as well as the day of our Saviour's nativity. According to the computation of Dionysius Exiguus, who introduced the method of dating the birth of Christ, he was born in the 4th year of the 194th Olympiad, the 753rd from the foundation of Rome. It is generally conceded, however, that he placed this event about four years too late, and it involves the necessity of placing the date of the birth in the year 4 a.c. The institution of the date of the nativity as a feast day is attributed to Pope Telesphorus, about A.D. 137, and it has been observed as such ever since. At first it was one of the most movable of the Christian festive days, often confounded with the Epiphany, and celebrated by the Eastern churches in April and May. In the fourth century Pope Julius I. ordered an investigation to be made concerning the date, and the result was an agreement by the theologians of the East and West upon the 25th of December, which was uniformly accepted, and that day has since been celebrated as the nativity by the Christian world.

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